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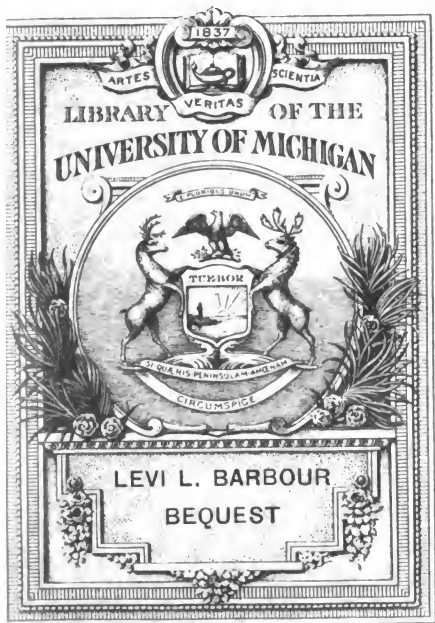
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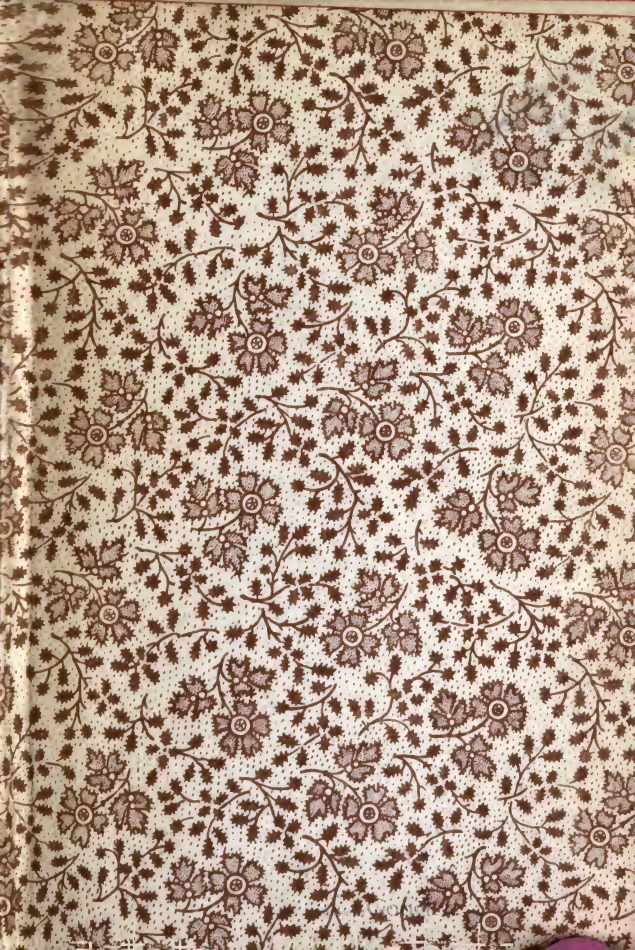
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Golden sands

Adrien Sylvain





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Sylvain, Adrien

GOLDEN SANDS:

A COLLECTION

OF

LITTLE COUNSELS

FOR THE

*HAPPINESS AND SANCTIFICATION
OF DAILY LIFE.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

Let us sow good thoughts:
We will reap good actions.

SECOND SERIES.

NEW YORK:

D. & J. SADLER & Co., 31 BARCLAY STREET.

MONTREAL: 275 NOTRE DAME STREET.



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ELLA J. McMAHON
1878.

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from K. R. B. sent
6-20-29
2 vols.

GOLDEN SANDS.*

Where art thou going precious book
Dear little Sands of Gold ?
The pages over which I look,
Have charms for me untold.

Where do I go ? modest and pure
I scatter blessings round,
At every hearth I seek, 'tis sure
That love and peace abound.

* LES PAILLETES D'OR.

Où vas-tu, petite feuille,
O chère Paillettes d' Or ?
Tes pages que je recueille
Sont pour mon âme un trésor.

Où je vais ? simple et modest
Je fais le bien en passant . . .
Au foyer lorsque je reste,
Je charme et rends innocent.

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Sweet star that on this troubled earth
Reveals the heaven near,
And to each heart makes known the worth
Of holy love and fear.

Unto a mother I impart
Counsels both pure and wise,
And from the world the maiden's heart
Is lifted to the skies.

Gently to God I draw them near,
From duty take the pain.
Into a smile I turn a tear,
And make Hope shine again.

Douce étoile, sur la terre
L'âme bénit ma lueur,
Car je suis la messagère
De la paix et du bonheur !

Pour la mère de famille
J'ai des conseils précieux;
Je montre à la jeune fille
Le chemin qui mène aux cieux.

Doucement vers Dieu j'attire,
Je fais aimer le devoir;
Je fais naître le sourire
Et je fais briller l'espoir.

Often with words of pitying love
The weeping eyes are dried,
And the poor heart at length doth prove
The balm of friendship tried.

When on the rugged paths of life
The weary falter, fall,
I give new courage for the strife,
Virtue and faith recall.

Those who have tasted sorrow here,
Have felt the chastening rod,
To those I show where Hope shines clear
Before the gates of God.

—*Translated by Miss S. H. Dabney*

Souvent je sèche les larmes
Par un mot plein de pitié,
Et je fais goûter les charmes
Que j' emprunte à l' amitié.

Après un triste naufrage,
Soutien du cœur abattu,
Je relève le courage
Je ranime la vertu.

Toujours chère à la souffrance,
Dans le calice de fiel
Je fais tomber l' espérance ;
A tous je montre le ciel !

—*Une Enfant de Marie*

GOLDEN SANDS.

Will our dear *Golden Sands*, after months of absence, find their accustomed place at the fireside?

Several months of absence! And during this time how many flowers have faded, how many friendships have perished, how many good counsels have been forgotten!

Will you share the fate of these flowers, these counsels, these friendships—little leaves which were expected so impatiently, welcomed so eagerly, and preserved with so much pleasure!

Have a few months sufficed to make your absence no longer felt, to make you no longer looked for, and, upon

again beholding you after you have been laid aside and forgotten, will they say, with indifference, *Formerly these papers came every month to bring us a few good thoughts, and we were fond of them?*

* *
*

No; too many letters have come to us reclaiming *Golden Sands*, urging their return, to permit us to believe that they will not receive the cordial welcome of former years.

"They held a place in our lives, and that place is vacant." writes a young girl who devotes herself to the education of her sisters.

"We feel a want since the *Golden Sands* have ceased to come," says another letter.

"Why do you no longer send us the *Golden Sands?*" writes the mother of

a family. "They made my daughters more amiable, and me happier and more forbearing."

"The *Golden Sands* have taught me more than great books: I still need them," writes a woman of the world.

Behold them once more: they return, bringing, as in former years, a good thought, a pious counsel, a word of hope.

They return to distribute each month their little treasure of joy, of peace, of charity, of happiness.

* *
*

Thanks, unknown friends who, during the last six years, have welcomed and loved the *Golden Sands*. Be pleased to receive them once more.

I have made an *abundant collection* from nature, from souls, from books;

and, before sending them to you, I have tested their mission of peace and joy in my own life and in the hearts of my friends.

The good which they have done us they will effect in you; for do not all hearts resemble one another which are thrilled by the words, *God, duty, devotion?*

I.

HAPPINESS.

Is it not a good omen—this word placed on the first page? Does it not mean that our little book wishes to be a messenger of happiness?

Messenger of happiness! What a beautiful title!

To show where happiness is to be found, to *gather* and diffuse it—what a sweet and gentle mission!

First of all, then, our little leaves wish to tell *where happiness is*. Do not suppose it such a difficult task.

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Happiness radiates from all that atmosphere which surrounds our souls, and which we call *family employment*—our *position in the order of Providence*—just as through the material atmosphere which surrounds the body is diffused the light which gladdens and nourishes.

The atmosphere of the soul is full of *joys*, as heaven is full of *stars*.

The *stars* of the soul are called *duties*. Wherever there is a *duty* there also may a *joy* be found.

To accomplish a duty is to diffuse a *joy*; and as every moment of life holds a duty, it depends upon us to

surround ourselves with unceasing joys.

How beautiful, then, is life, with its uninterrupted *duties*, its uninterrupted joys, and after a series of days, more or less extended, heaven forever!

When I study my life in detail, I see that each moment brings me—

A little work to do.

A little occasion of manifesting affection and kindness.

A little occasion of being devoted.

A little patience and forbearance to practice.

A little occasion for a short prayer.

A little struggle to sustain. . . .

All these are duties imposed by God; and each time I perform them, with the intention, more or less general, of submitting to the will of God, I feel a glow of happiness, so that life,

which is a painful and weary burden to the greater part of men, who live forgetful of God, is for me, if I wish it, an uninterrupted series of new joys.

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* *

Do not receive these words as the impressions of an enthusiast; they but express the thoughts of one who knows God and seeks to love Him.

Duty is the will of God, clearly manifested when the hour for the performance of a certain action presents itself.

Then to fulfill one's duty is to do the will of God.

To do the will of God is to procure His glory, to give to His heart the joy which an obedient child gives to the heart of his father.

Now, if we give pleasure to God, will not He—He *who is so good*—recompense us even immediately?

Oh! I pray you, try only for an hour!

II.

On the prie-dieu of a friend who never enters her room without kneeling for a moment to recommend her work to God, I read the following words:

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At this hour do something useful.

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Do not put off till later what you can and should do now.

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First of all, repair the disorder that you perceive about you and within you.

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Employ well the quarter of an hour which God gives you; you might regret it one day.

* * *

Work calmly in the presence of God. Are you sad and perplexed? Call upon Him. Are you anxious? Turn to Him a moment, and ever continue your work.

How is it possible that, under the influence of these thoughts, coming, so to speak, like a ray of light from heaven, your work should not be useful, should not leave your soul in peace, and, above all, should not be meritorious?

III.

Hearts which have preserved their innocence, and who, for that very reason, remain devoted and affectionate, are always a *little childish*. They must find about them those *thousand little nothings* which bear the relation

to happiness that illusion does to truth.

To feel that those they love are very near them; to pray the same prayers; to await them at an appointed hour; to revisit them in thought at a certain place; to work and grow weary for them; to smile at their memory—all this is so much a part of their nature that to them it seems impossible to do without it. . . .

Does the good God become displeased? No, certainly not; . . . but because these soft little affections turn the heart somewhat from its course, and create the risk of weakening it, God sends from time to time, they know not whence, an icy breath which gradually and softly creates a void about them.

Poor hearts! they weep bitterly,

but, because they are good, they do not murmur: they are resigned, and long more ardently for heaven. . . .

God has not given strength and energy to all souls; there are some which He has only made *good*. Are there not flowers which are only intended to give perfume?

IV.

POOR LITTLE FLOWER.

I.

Only a few months ago my little flower was fragrant and blooming.

It was the gift of a friend, and I loved it, not only because it was beautiful, but, above all, because he gave it—he who is so kind to me.

“I will take good care of it,” I said, upon receiving it, “and each time that you return to my room, its blossoms

will tell you of my friendship for you."

The first days it delighted me; its presence brightened my room, and made a spring-time about me. Ten times a day I interrupted my work to look at it, fancying that its green foliage smiled upon me.

Two weeks passed thus.

Then another friend—one of those who only help us to pass away the time—came to seek me for some party of pleasure. Returning in the evening, weary and tired, I paid no attention to the flower in the corner which awaited my care.

The next morning it drooped sadly, and I, feeling most repentant for my neglect, hastened to give it the water for which it languished, earnestly

promising that I would not forget it in the *future*. A flower requires so little care!

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The promise was sincere ; but alas ! the next day I was absorbed by other things—idle curiosities, extravagant desires—and the neglected flower drooped, and its fading leaves seemed to say, “Ungrateful one, can you not give me a moment each day?”

Oh, I could ! I wished to, and I did keep my promise for a time. . . . Then, forgetting it again, its reproaches wearied me. One evening, on returning to my room, I found only a withered stem in the earthen pot which held my flower.

I had not the courage to contemplate the result of my carelessness, and

I cast it rudely from me, for it still reproached me.

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Some days after, the friend who had given it to me came joyously into my room. I saw his glance seek the window where the flower should be

He seemed to understand, and turned away his head without a word. . . . Our conversation was a little embarrassed, and as he pressed my hand at parting I thought there were tears in his eyes.

II.

This little story is sad, but I know one still more so.

A similar experience came to some children whom I love. Only it was not a flower that was given to them, and which they allowed to wither, it

was a soul. And the friend who had confided it to them was the *good God*. Oh! if among the children who read this there are any whose consciences reproach them, and who are moved at this story, let them not despair.

Neither the dew of heaven nor the rays of the sun can make the dead plant bloom again. But there is a dew which can give new life to the neglected soul, and that is the *tear of repentance*. There is a ray of sun which can still revive it, and that is an *act of love*.

V.

Do you wish to win back a friend who, after long years of intimacy, has withdrawn from you, irritated by an imprudent word, or a painful suspicion, and who, through fear of finding him

self again misjudged, still keeps aloof? Make an appeal to his heart: say to him simply, *I need you.*

He who will not hasten at this appeal, forgetting all the pain he has endured, can no longer possess a *kind heart*: therefore, think of him no more except to recommend **him to God.**

VI.

LITTLE OFFICES.

If we could form an idea of the influence of a word of praise or approbation, coming simply from the lips of a superior as the reward of labor a little more successful, a more sustained effort, a fatigue which proves the good will, how eagerly we would seek an occasion for addressing a *word of praise to a child, a servant, a friend!*

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* *

Let no one misunderstand what we ask. It is neither *flattery nor compliments*, but a few simple words: a "*Thank you*," for example, accompanied by a pressure of the hand or an affectionate glance.

*How much pleasure you give me!
How much trouble you take for me! I
love to have you do anything for me—
you do it so heartily and so well! How
kind you are! . . .*

Any of those thousand heartfelt expressions which we never write and never search for—they escape us impulsively when we are touched and moved.

We have seen workmen, whose only object seemed to be money, weep with joy upon hearing one of those

expressions uttered in accents of sincerity which could not be doubted.



Praise delicately bestowed *encourages and doubles our energies*. It makes us forget our fatigue: it strengthens the soul, above all makes it devoted.

Do you wish to be well *served*? Show that you are contented with those who serve you, and persuade yourself sometimes that no one could perform better than they the work which they are doing for you.

Do you wish to be *loved*? Let it be understood that you know that you are loved, and that it makes you happy.

Do you wish to find those about you *devoted*? Take for granted that they are so, and appeal to this devo-

, from time to time, as if it really
ted.

delicate *praise rouses our courage
restores us to the right path.* Aff-
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uently merit.

'raise delicately bestowed gradually
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ieved itself incapable of anything
ls, since we have told it so, that it
still capable of something, and
kes an effort. The heart which
ieved itself entirely abandoned feels
at we have need of it, and the

thought of being still useful, and even sought for, restores and revives it.

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Delicate praise *gives happiness*. Have you never experienced that sensation of extravagant joy at the reception of a compliment which was simply and lovingly bestowed upon you by a superior, or even by a friend?

Do you remember how pleasant your day was under the influence of that word of praise which you felt you had merited?

Oh! why not give the same satisfaction to those who are dependant upon you? It would cost you so little.

And if it is necessary to appeal to your own interest, do you not remember how he who showed that he appreciated you *grew* in your estimation?

If you wish to be loved, to be esteemed, if you wish that your faults should be imperceptible, be not only *kind in actions*, but in *words also—praise sometimes*.

VII.

Creatures, even the holiest, are always an obstacle which obscures the vision of the soul when their memory preoccupies us.

But when misfortune or indifference has dispersed them, and, all disheartened, we have learned that God alone was necessary to us, . . . then a new atmosphere surrounds us, formed of grace, of love, of peace; and it shows a *Father who watches over a poor abandoned child—a friend who loves the heart deprived of the joys of friend*

ship—a master who gathers the tears of resigned suffering.

Thus it is that truly pious souls can smile in the midst of suffering which the world calls *insupportable*. . . . God takes the place of everything with them.

VIII.

A Christian mother was speaking of Jesus to her little child, who stood before her eagerly listening to the touching traits of our Saviour's life.

"Oh, mamma!" he cried, with emotion, "how I wish I could have been with the good Jesus."

"And what couldst thou have done for him—a little one like thee?"

"For Jesus?" replied the child, surprised by the unexpected question; . . . then, after a moment's hesitation,

he said naïvely, "*I would have done his errands.*"

These words contain a lesson for us!

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My God! Thou who dost not work *materially* with Thy creatures: Thou must need some one to go from Thee to them, transmitting Thy orders, bearing Thy words, distributing Thy benefits. . . . I come to offer myself to Thee. *My God! choose me to execute Thy errands, Thy commissions.*

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The commissions in a family fall to the care of the *child that is most beloved*, for we place more confidence in him than in any one else, often confiding to him the most intimate secrets of our hearts.

They are the portion of *the most discreet and faithful child*, for he must execute *to the letter* all that he is commanded, render an exact account of what he has done; and he is frequently obliged to proceed in such a manner that no one may suspect the mission which he has received.

They are the portion of the child possessed of the *most delicacy*, for he must wound no one, even though what he says may be of a nature to cause pain: for he must choose the time, place and manner of proceeding, with a tact which the heart alone can teach.

They are the portion of the *most devoted child*, for he cannot listen to the promptings of self-love, of indolence, of egotism, or of his repugnances, but must proceed to his work

thinking only of the obedience he owes his mother.

Oh! if the good God would accept me, how happy and even proud I would be!

My God! choose me to execute Thy commissions!

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I am here, my God; what wilt Thou have me do?

Do not leave thy family to-day. Thy mother is sad; she is perhaps anxious about the future, or some painful news is weighing on her heart. . . . Go softly to her, and, while fulfilling thy ordinary occupations, tell her that I am most kind, most powerful—tell her to abandon herself to my providence.

Yes, my God!

Thou seest this disorder, which no one has thought of repairing, and which this evening will cause others to be impatient, to scold, to be dissatisfied. . . . Hasten thy work, and quietly, without attracting any attention, put everything in its place.

Yes, my God !

I was deeply grieved yesterday, and again this morning; and those who disobeyed me, oh ! if thou didst but know how I have loaded them with favors ! . . . To-day be very submissive to all that I will send thee ; remain very united to my will ; labor suffer, pray, in order to make me a slight reparation.

Yes, my God !

Be my apostle to all those whom I may send to thee : *poor*, who will ask alms, and to whom thou wilt give

telling them to return thanks to me; *children*, whom thou wilt cause to be amused, and to whom thou wilt say a little word of my goodness; *strangers*, to whom thou wilt be affable and to whom thou wilt say a passing word of the joy one feels in being submissive to me.

Yes, my God !

Be a *victim* to-day, and avert for a few days longer the effects of my justice on the guilty—perhaps they will be converted. And for this end pray with more respect, despite the weariness thou wilt feel; speak but little, except upon necessary subjects; complain of nothing; do not seek thy ease. . . . A day of mortification willingly accepted is soon over, and it will be meritorious for thee and glorious for me.

Yes, my God!

Receive Holy Communion very devoutly to-morrow. I will fill thee with joy and peace, and thou wilt cause this joy and peace to softly penetrate the souls of all whom I will send near thee. A pleasant greeting, a loving word will suffice for this: only preserve thyself recollected.

Yes, my God!

Then is it true the good God has chosen me to *execute* His commissions? Oh, how happy I am!

IX.

PIOUS SOUVENIRS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOME.

Souvenirs, alas! because our firesides are scarcely Christian any longer, and to find again the pious customs which we wish to collect for these pages

we must question the sweet emotions and gentle teachings of our early years.

Let me visit in spirit the blessed fireside which sheltered my infancy and which shone before me in after life like a sanctuary all resplendent with the thought of God.

There our souls were gradually imbued with faith, with confidence, with respect, for they saw God everywhere in all things.

There our hearts were formed to truth, courage and devotion for we were loved without weakness, corrected without bitterness, guarded without constraint, and, above all, we were gradually accustomed to self-denial and patient suffering.

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Christian mothers will love these

souvenirs, and God, in whose presence they are written, will give to them what He gives to the seed sown by the wind—the faculty of blossoming and bringing forth fruit.

We have gathered them as they presented themselves to our hearts, without any precise order: perhaps they will thus be more attractive and useful.

I.

That which first struck us in Christian families was the *ever-present thought of God*. God was the air they breathed; God was the invisible, all-powerful Master who gave, who took away, who modified events, and who must be held before all creatures. God was invoked in all undertakings *as the fundamental principle of the household*.

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Before taking possession of a new house, they had it blessed and from time to time this blessing was renewed, whenever a room was altered or the house underwent any important change

The benediction of the priest drew from heaven those sweet family virtues which they esteemed more than riches—kindness, mutual forbearance, purity resignation.

There was also in the household a pledge of peace and prosperity: when the good God comes anywhere does He not bring peace?

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A new garment destined to be worn on a grand occasion was always blessed, such as the robe of the

newly-born child, the dress of the little first-communicant, and the bridal robes which were to be worn before the altar.

The baby's white robe, the young girl's veil, the boy's silver crucifix, the bride's veil were carefully folded and laid away in what was called the *treasury*.

And it was a very sweet joy for the mother if, after many years, she could place on the head of her daughter the veil which she herself had worn.

Sometimes, poor mother, this veil, preserved with so much love, was placed in the tomb of her for whom it was destined, and who had gone to heaven.

We have elsewhere related this touching remark of a pious child who, from time to time, visited this

family treasury to kiss her white robe and first communion veil. "They seem," she said to her mother, "to restore me the happiness of my first communion;" and then she added, smiling, "My confessor told me that, when I would be unwilling to look upon them, I would be no longer good. . . . *I come to see if I am still good.*"

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The fields, the animals about the farm, all that was destined for the service of man were blessed.

God was so much a part of the family that the privation of His paternal benediction would have been looked upon as a presage of misfortune.

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No important affair was undertaken

which an act of religion did not consecrate. A purchase of any importance, a change of position, an investment of money was always preceded by an alms, a mass, or a pilgrimage. A mass was also said, a wax taper left burning all day before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, after a grace received, a misfortune avoided, or any unexpected prosperity.

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From the moment that a danger threatened, or that an illness or an accident was feared, they called loudly for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and the saints. The whole family sent to heaven that cry of a child which is so touching, *My Father! My Mother!*

II.

- The priest was no stranger in the family. He was frequently invited to share in its festivals; he always came uncalled when he knew there was sorrow in the household.

He was the friend, the counselor, the confidant, the protector of all.

No one left home for an absence of a few months without going to ask his blessing; the first visit on returning was always made to him.

His words were received as those of the good God; it was he who interfered to reconcile families, and to obtain the pardon of the erring child.

His visit rejoiced the household: hearts at ease in his presence softly brightened; for he always brought happiness.

Oh, if we knew what we had lost in estranging the priest from the family!

III.

Every family, rich or poor, had its little oratory. Sometimes, when the house was small, it was a simple alcove in the bed-room. There were seen the signs of a Christian: the *crucifix*, the *image of the Blessed Virgin* and the *patron saints*, a *wax figure of the Infant Jesus*, the *reliquary*, the *holy-water font*, *blessed palm* and *candles*. *Souvenirs of a first communion*, these were often numerous, for they were all preserved.

Before this little domestic altar the household always assembled for evening prayer.

There, on Sundays and festival days, a page of the gospel or the life of a

saint was read. The *gospel, the catechism, the Lives of the Saints* were everywhere found to have been preserved with pious care, notwithstanding they had long been in use in the family.

When the children were to go to confession, it was there, under the eyes of their mother, that they prepared themselves before going to church.

There the mother led her little one, to teach him his prayers, and explain to him, by the aid of the images, the mysteries of the faith.

There, in the presence of the protectors of the family, the farewells were uttered when the son or daughter was obliged to leave the fireside.

We knew a family where, every evening after night-prayers were said

by the mistress of the house, surrounded by her children and servants, an *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* were added for mutual pardon of the pain they might have caused one another.

And before separating, after giving the orders for the morrow, a few kind, affectionate, sympathetic, hopeful words refreshed and soothed those hearts which might have been wounded during the day, or which perhaps had felt slight germs of jealousy.

How great were the affection and devotion of this family !

IV.

The portion of the poor always headed the list of expenditures.

They did not look upon this as a *favor*, but a *debt* which they paid to Jesus Christ. This portion was *sa*

cred: made in advance at each receipt of income, it was put aside, and no one ever dared to touch it. It was the *rent* owed to God.

This portion was *large*, and there were families who replaced the child whom the good God had taken from them by a poor child whom they clothed and for whose apprenticeship they paid.

There were others who every day gave nourishment to a poor invalid, with the thought that in him they had a *perpetual intercessor*. If the sick man forgot to pray *his wounds prayed in his place*; and when he died they begged M. le Curé to choose another invalid to replace him.

Never was a poor person, particularly in the villages, sent away without a little bread, and it was always

the youngest child who respectfully gave it to him. But then the poor man asked for the love of the *good God*, and, kneeling on the cold stone, he recited a *De profundis* for *the dead of the family*, and his gratitude was always expressed in those words so Christian and so encouraging, *God restore it to you!* How many times we have seen mothers ask for their little child the blessing of an old beggar, who, much moved, placed his trembling hands on the head of the little three-year-old and murmured a prayer!

X.

Purity expands, brightens the soul, and promotes its growth. it is its spring-time.

Vice contracts, saddens, and with

ers it; it is the winter, or perhaps the breath of the devil who passes.

XI.

A CHARMING CONFRATERNITY.

Hear a pious author's* description of a charming confraternity in which, I am sure, you will immediately enroll yourself:

“But, together with grace and the angels, there is a third band of diminutive figures, with veils on their heads, which are flitting everywhere, making gloomy men smile, angry men grow meek, and sick men cease to groan, lighting up hope in the eyes of the dying, sweetening the heart of the bitter, and adroitly turning men away from sin just when they are on the point of com-

* Father Faber.

mitting it. They seem to have strange power. Men listen to them who have been deaf to the pleadings of angels. They gain admittance into hearts before the doors of which grace has lost its patience and gone away. No sooner are the doors open than these veiled messengers, these cunning ministers of God, have gone and returned with lightning like speed, and brought grace back with them."

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Would you know the name of these *little creatures*, so agreeable that even the most wicked persons never think of repulsing them—occupying so little space, and so unimportant, that they never prevent the perfect accomplishment of duty, but rather make it easier?

They are called *acts of kindness*

Every heart, even the poorest, if it will remain innocent, can produce them.

They escape from it like bees from a hive—not, like them, seeking honey that they may hoard it, but bearing each one his portion of honey that they may deposit it in another heart.

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If only two members of a family or a community seriously wished to enrol themselves in the service of the good God by joining this gracious confraternity of *acts of kindness*, there would soon be *saints* in that family.

It is almost impossible to tell the sanctifying power of a more or less extended series of *acts of kindness*. If we understood it, instead of tormenting and disquieting ourselves, or

complaining of the difficulty of living together, or bearing with the character of others, . . . *we would pray and we would become kind!*

Perhaps the most useful particular examen would be to count the *acts of kindness* performed during the day, and to oblige ourselves to accomplish a larger number on the morrow.

XII.

Who among us has not some time felt himself unable to say a kind word, to make an advance, or to generously ask pardon, even though understanding the necessity of uttering this word, of making this advance, of asking this pardon?

It would seem as though at times an invisible weight pressed upon the heart, preventing it from being *kind*,

as it feels the *power*, and, above all, the *need* to be

Oh, how deplorable is the state of a heart thus *paralyzed*!

I feel that I have wounded my friend, my mother perhaps. I know that a simple affectionate word, a slight advance, a pressure of the hand, an appealing glance will suffice to make all forgotten; . . . and *I cannot resolve to do even as little as this!* . . .

And in spite of myself as it were, I become *hardened* in my indifference or my pride!

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My God! will we, in such moments as these, be like one given over to the power of the devil: and this spirit of darkness, will he, before leading us to evil, try to paralyze our powers by preventing us from doing good?

This may be so.

Ah! when we feel ourselves thus obstinate, hard, and cold, let us look forward a little into our day, and we will certainly find several breaches in that *hedge of continuous duties* which God has placed about our soul for its defense.

The devil has not yet been able to effect an entrance for the breach was not sufficiently serious: but his icy breath has penetrated and reaching the heart first of all has paralyzed it. An idle heart engenders *discontent and ill humor*. discontent leads to *idleness and vexation*; idleness is the ruin of *duty*. and when duty is despised, or simply disowned the soul is left alone as completely alone as a little child at night in the desert.

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Oh! let us not leave the smallest interval between our duties. Let one duty interlace with another like the branches of a hedge, like the links in a chain. Let us labor and pray, unceasingly labor and pray, and our heart will always preserve its freshness and amiability.

XIII.

THE ANGELS OF THE HEARTH.

VI.

The Angel of Piety.

It is to him that God has confided the special mission of guarding the peace of the family and preserving in it that sweet joy which makes it like a reflection of heaven.

It is he who leads to and retains

by the hearth the angels, each of whom bring to it their sweet influence and charm: It is he who preserves on the lips the smile which the angel of kindness has placed there; he who inspires the angel of *little attentions* and the angel of *gratitude*; he in fine, who sustains the angels of *sacrifice* and *resignation*.



The saints represent him holding in his hand sometimes a *golden* vase filled with a divine liquid, which he pours, drop by drop, into souls that open to him: and when these souls are wearied they take new courage when they are disheartened they rise again: when they are sad they begin again to smile.

Sometimes in his hand is a *torch*

which he holds before the *mind* of him who studies, who prays, or who meditates. Then for him the Eucharist no longer contains mysteries difficult to accept; the lives of the saints astonish him no more; profane science can never more intoxicate his mind.

This torch he holds before the *heart* which loves, and its affection is chaste, devoted, constant, and peaceful.

Formerly the saints placed a *basket of flowers* in his hand, and they represented him scattering the flowers wherever we must pass.

He does not pluck out the thorns, nor the contempt, nor sickness, nor deceptions, nor failures: but he makes all these things, not only acceptable, but so *good* that the soul begins to desire them and to say to God, *More, still more!*

Formerly, in fine, he held in his hand *ivory tablets*, on which he wrote the thoughts, the desires, the affections, the labors which he inspired, so that nothing should be lost; and he had such power before God that all that he presented was accepted and rewarded.

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The halo round his head bears these words of St. Paul, *Piety is useful to all*, and his lips murmur softly to those who listen :

All comes from God.

All goes to God.

All in the presence of God.

All in union with God.

Sweet words, which he develops with an infinite charm in the silence of meditation.

Listen: If *all come from God*, pray,

says he, pray that He may give to thee —He is so rich; enjoy what He lends thee, but be not proud; accept what He sends thee, even suffering; murmur not at what He takes from thee —it is His own that He takes back again.

If *all go to God*, give to each of thy hours the charm of an *accomplished duty*, that it may mount joyously to Him; surround each of thy thoughts with the gracious halo of a *pure intention*, that God may willingly accept it.

If *God see all*, do nothing wrong, nothing disagreeable, nothing incomplete, in order not to offend the pure glance of so good a Father.

If *all be done in union with God*, then fear nothing. If thou dost suffer, God is with thee; if thou art despised, God

is with thee; even if thou shouldst fall, God is there to raise thee up.

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The presence of the *Angel of Piety* is not manifested by one particular act, but by a continual radiance which escapes from the soul.

This radiance is a calm and peaceful *smile*, even in the midst of tears.

It is *kindness* to all.

It is the *perfection of labor*.

It is the *forgetfulness of self*.

It is *peace* which may be disturbed for a moment, like the surface of the water by a violent wind, but immediately resumes its course.

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Happy souls who have for their companion in life the *Angel of Piety*!

Happy the families under whose roof this angel has found a shelter

He does not wait to be called, like the others: he comes of his own accord into innocent souls.

Innocence, received in baptism and strengthened by frequent communion attracts him as the rose attracts the bee, as the nest attracts the bird.

He only asks that you will guard and keep him.

XIV.

Poor soul! do you know why you are sad? Because you regard as a necessity what is only an *accessory*. In life affection should only be the *detail*, the *embroidery*, so to speak. The foundation of the cloth is *duty*.

Seek, then, *to perform your duty*, and if you labor assiduously and calmly,

with the intention which alone gives to duty its value, remain in peace: *affection* will come softly reviving and cheering you.

And if that of creatures is wanting to you, the love of the good God will never fail you: and when Thou, O my God, sayest to me, *I am pleased; I love thee*, what matters it if all the world forget me!

XV.

THE LITTLE DEMONS OF THE HEARTH.

But . . .

Still another of those wicked little words which fall on the reputation like a drop of corrosive poison on a delicate face—which penetrate and hide themselves in the soul, like a thorn or a steel point burying itself in the flesh.



We have branded that other expression, *they say—they say*, that sovereign of the world despised everywhere, and everywhere listened to, that messenger of false news, that scourer of the highway, that pedlar of gossip, that *destroyer* of friendships.

But is more hypocritical, and consequently more treacherous.

But does more evil, because it says less: it leaves you to suspect more, for it only shows itself sweetly after a compliment.

But is the contradiction which irritates and destroys all harmony.

But is the opposition which raises the storm.

But is the suspicion which begets distrust.

But is the icy breath which cools affection and arrests devotion.

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They say, no doubt, is sometimes uttered maliciously; but it most frequently springs from heedlessness and thoughtlessness.

But is the servant of *jealousy*. Listen: "That person has real merit, but . . ."

Of *caviling*: "You are right, *but* . . ."

Of *spitefulness*: "That person would succeed, *but* . . . She would be an excellent friend, *but* . . ."

Of *laziness and selfishness*: "I would like to be of service to you, *but* . . ."

Of *hypocrisy*: "She is more clever than I, even more intelligent, *but* . . ."

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Oh! when will we be *frank*, saying

of what is good, *it is good*; of what is beautiful, *it is beautiful*, without adding any modification!

When will we possess a *liberal mind*, looking *fairly* at the good and beautiful before us, without seeking by side-long glances to discover a crooked line, coloring a little too deep, a slightly inharmonious sentence?

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Let us take to ourselves this advice of a profoundly Catholic writer:

If God were to say to you, *What gift do you wish?* as you are bound in justice to ask only for that which in you will be most useful to others, reply fearlessly, *Lord, greatness of soul!*

Greatness of soul will make you overlook little offenses, and teach you

to pardon great wrongs; greatness of soul will bring to your lips kind words, and render your good works frequent and easy to you, particularly the best and most difficult, which is bearing with the faults of others, and even being blind to them.

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He who will withhold the word *but* from the praise which he bestows will experience an enlargement in his ideas and in his heart; and, like a room thrown widely open and illuminated by the powerful rays of the sun, he will feel the almost intoxicating sunshine of the good and beautiful which God has given to His creatures.

Now, after the pleasure of *doing good* and *feeling that we are kind*, there is no greater on earth than to

seek and understand the *good* and *beautiful* in others.

XVI.

What is necessary to make one *forbearing*? A great deal of *good sense* joined to a *little piety*.

XVII.

THE LESSONS OF A DAISY.

I saw her from a distance, poor child! She appeared to be leaning pensively against the window, and holding in her hand a *daisy*, while she questioningly and slowly despoiled it of its petals.

What she wished to learn, I do not know; I only heard her pale lips murmur these words, *A little, a great deal, passionately, not at all*, as each

petal fell whirling to the ground at her feet.

I watched her at a distance, and felt touched. Poor child ! why do you confide the troubles of your soul to a flower ? Have you no mother ?

Why are you anxious about your future ? Have you not the good God, who prepares it for you with the same care that your mother, eighteen years ago, prepared your cradle ?

And when the petals of the daisy were nearly gone, as the child's fingers rested on the last, and her lips reluctantly murmured, *A little !*—an answer which Providence permitted—she let her arms fall discouraged by her side, and the poor young girl wept.

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Why do you weep, my child ? Does not this answer please you ?

Let me—let me, in the name of the gracious daisy which you have just destroyed, give you a lesson from my vast experience.

Was *a great deal* the answer you desired?

“A great deal” of wit! It often makes us wicked, cruel, and unjust; it causes tormenting jealousies, deceptions which spoil our triumphs, and a pride which is never satisfied.

“A great deal” of heart! It often brings anxious troubles, weary suffering, bitter sorrows, . . . and sometimes leads to contempt of duty.

“A great deal” of attraction! It produces wearing vanity, overwhelming deception, an insatiable desire to please, a restless fear of being depreciated, and often a neglect of domestic duties.

“*A great deal*” of fortune ! It often produces a wearying satiety, banishes calm and peaceful joys, deprives us of friendship, and makes us slaves to flattery.

No, no, my child ; do not desire *a great deal* of anything in this life, except, perhaps, of *forbearance and kindness*.

And if the good God has submitted you to the trial of “*a great deal*,” oh ! pray to Him that it may not be your perdition !

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Was “*passionately*” the answer you desired ?

Passionately ! Oh ! what harm this word does ! There is something to make one tremble in the thought which it awakens.

Passion is blind impulse, delirium, excess in all things.

When life is interpreted by the word *passionate*, we may say that there will be falls in that life: and if, by one of those miracles extremely rare, nothing appears exteriorly, the *interior* will resemble a palace consumed within by fire, where the visitor finds nothing but gaping walls, blackened furniture, and tapestry in rags.

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x

For you, my child I would prefer the answer, "*not at all*," as applied to fortune, to outward charms, to all that the world calls *success glory loveliness*.

I know well that is a hard answer which is interpreted by *continual privation*, and which exacts hard and incessant labor to supply the necessities and wants of those we love.

But let it not alarm you too much. God never disinherits one of His creatures to the point of letting him want for everything.

God may deprive a countenance of charms, a character of loveliness, a mind even of brilliant powers; but He never deprives the heart of *all love*, and with the *power of loving* He gives also that of asking, ever promising to hear us.

Now, my child, as long as we can *love* and *pray*, life has charms.

In loving we devote ourselves; and devotion renders one happy, even though it be not appreciated.

In praying we feel that we are loved; and O! if you knew how the love of God consoles one for the in-difference of creatures!

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There remains, my child, only one more answer from the *daisy* 'a little the paternal reply which Providence sent to your childish curiosity

Accept it and make it the maxim of your life.

A little, that is a modicum of the goods of fortune, a position which promises the calmest life, destroys anxiety for the future, and, though doubtless exacting daily labor, permits sweet enjoyments from time to time.

A little, that is moderation in our desires which leaves the soul happy in the possession of what it has, teaches it to draw therefrom all the profit possible, and to repel those dreams of a more brilliant position, of

a more extended reputation, of a more glorious name.

A little that is to say, of the heart's affection, regulated by duty, and reanimating that *family* circle around the hearth which is composed of parents to love, pious friends to gladden, poor to console, hearts to strengthen, and the sorrowing to comfort

A little that is to say, a taste for all that is beautiful—literature, works of art, music . . . not to the extent of giving us dreams of fame, but affording mental enjoyments all the more keen that our obligation of daily labor renders them more rare.

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You see my child, that “a *little*, the reply which the daisy made you, may still be a very beautiful portion, and you seemed to disdain it.

Oh! never despise one who has little exteriorly and remember that—

Here to live happy, we must be
More virtuous than wise;
Less joy in love than friendship see,
Health more than riches prize.
Uprightness seek for more than mind,
And in repose a profit find.*

— *Translated by Miss S. H. Dabney.*

XVIII.

To-day is a furrow traced before us: our thoughts. our desires our actions, our intentions. are the *seeds* which every moment, and often unconsciously, we drop into it.

* Pour être heureux, il faut avoir
Plus de vertus que de savoir
Plus d'amitié que de tendresse,
Plus de conduite que d'esprit
Plus de santé que de richesse
Plus de repos que de profit.

The furrow finished, we begin another, then another; each day a new one opens, and so on to the end of life: . . . and we are always sowing.

And all that we have sown takes root, grows and brings forth fruit without any further effort on our part. Even if we chance to look backward and behold these fruits, we do not recognize our work

And behind us the angels and the devils like reapers, gather in sheafs what belongs to them

They preserve it, and they will appear at the *last day* and lay it before the *Master*.

Is there not food for reflection in this picture?

XIX.

A friend sent me a fresh and useful

thought for the first page of the *Golden Sands* of this year.

I transcribe it with pleasure on this first leaf, as we place a soft and colored light at the entrance of a dark and unknown road, not only that it may render it less obscure, but that it may impart a gracious coloring to the route. This is the thought :

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“*Annoyances!* I have had plenty, I assure you, in the year which has just past: but . . .

But what?

I have not been *annoyed at all!*

Not *at all?*

No; I have a Friend who takes upon himself these troubles, and who is never better pleased than when they are confided to him. I bring him my annoyance, and expose to him sim-

ply my embarrassment, and under his direction things right themselves.

That is why you are never disturbed?

Why should I be disturbed? I have a habit of never keeping my cares; I bring them to him according as they come, and he always either dissipates them himself, or he gives me means of acquiring peace which astonish me.

And this Friend is not for you alone?

He is the Friend of all. He is called *Jesus*, and his dwelling is near by, *in the tabernacle of the altar.*"

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Sweet abandonment to Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament! O be, every day in this year, my light, my strength, my consolation, my repose!

XX.

A dull and wearied man—and he is nearly always weary who has not some definite occupation—is naturally fretful and easily irritated.

A trifle irritates him. . . . If he is well bred, he shows his irritation quietly and politely, to be sure; but **there** is a certain agitation on the surface, and you easily perceive that he is disturbed.

Contradictions enrage him, resistance annoys him, silence exasperates him, submission makes him nervous. . . .

Oh! how useful then is *occupation*, which absorbs what is exuberant in life!

There is a danger, perhaps, that this absorbing occupation may render us

cold and indifferent ; but a very simple means of preventing this sad result is to impose upon ourselves a labor which has for its end *the happiness and well-being of those we love.*

Oh ! how kind this makes us !

XXI.

MY DIRECTION.

Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.

It is very simple, very easy : it exacts nothing beyond the strength of my poor soul ; but I feel that it unites me with God, that it makes me more devoted, more submissive in suffering, more faithful to my duty, and that it gradually prepares me for death.

Since I have made it my rule of conduct, it has always been to me *con-*

solation, light and strength; and yet Thou knowest, my God, that there have been bitter hours in my life!

Dear souls who, like myself, wish to become holy, I give it to you in all simplicity; hear it, it comes from the loving Heart of Jesus.

This direction is based on the gentle words of Jesus Christ: *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*

I.

BE MEEK.

I.

MEEK TOWARDS GOD.

Living from day to day in His paternal presence, where all things are regulated by an ever-watchful Providence:

A mother does not more carefully prepare the room of her child than

God prepares each hour which He sends you.

All that is *before me to be done* He wishes that I should do, and *do it well*.

I have all that I need of time, intelligence, aptness, and knowledge.

All the *suffering that comes to me* He wishes that I should bear, even though I do not then see the immediate reason for it; and if sorrow forces a complaint from me, He tells me, *Courage, child; it is I who wish it*.

All that *arrests me in my work, and disturbs my plans, He purposely sends*, foreseeing that too much success could make me vain, or too great facility self-indulgent. He wishes me to understand that it is not *success which leads to heaven, but devotion and labor*.

Thus, before these thoughts, how all revolt ceases! With what peace and happiness all labor is begun, continued, interrupted, resumed, and finished!

How energetically those enemies are repulsed who assault me every hour: *laziness, too great eagerness, overanxiety for success*, disgust with difficulties!

* *

The past—does it sometimes trouble me with the painful memory of so many years far from the good God?

O! certainly, there is in my heart a deep sentiment of confusion and regret; but why should I lose my peace of soul? Did not God say to me, by the mouth of the priest, the depository of His power, *I pardon thee?*

Have I not, as He desired, made a *sincere confession* and *complete submission*, and am I not still ready to do all that is asked me in His name by the one to whom I have confided my soul?

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The future—does it try to alarm me?

I smile at those foolish dreams of my imagination. Is not my future in God's hands?

What! all that will happen me to-morrow, in ten, in twenty years, is arranged and prepared with a mother's care by the good God, and can I fear that it will not be for my *good*?

O my God! remain, remain the Master of my *future*, and make it what Thou wilt!

II.

MEEK WITH EVENTS.

Events are the *messengers* of the goodness or of the justice of God.

Each one of them has a mission to fulfil towards us · and why not let it accomplish in peace this mission which it has received from God ?

Events, whether painful, sorrowful, or heart-rending are never other than God wills them.

Sickness. ill-will. loss of fortune, separations loss of friendship, contempt, failures humiliations . . . God sends **them all** · and when they have accomplished their work *they will pass away*. and my soul. if it has been at peace will remain more pure and holy.

I may regard them a little fearfully perhaps, and with a very natural senti

ment of terror—the saints smiled upon them through their tears—but never will I permit them to take from me the smallest portion either of my confidence or my resignation.

* *

To be meek with events is not *awaiting them* with that stoical firmness which is the result of pride nor is it hardening oneself to the extent of repressing every sigh : no !

God permits us to *prevent* them, to *avoid* them. to *fly* from them if possible. to *lighten* them, or at least *alleviate* them.

And this good Father. with these *messengers of justice*, sends also means of bearing them and often even means of avoiding them, such as—

Remedies in sickness

Friendship in the troubles of the heart.

Devotedness in privation.

Consolations in sadness.

Tears in sorrow.

It is God who has created all these, and who, foreseeing that perhaps we might not know how to seek them, has ordered privileged souls to *love us*, to *console us*, to *comfort us*, to *serve us*—saying to them, *What you will do for one of these, my least brethren, I will regard as done unto me.*

Oh! then, in my sorrow, I will listen to the friendly voice which speaks to me of hope! I will lovingly receive the eager attention of friendship. I will accept, then, with gratitude, the *time* which is devoted to me, the *privations* which are borne for me; and I will pray God to repeat to these

friends so kind, *All that you do for him I will do for you.*

III.

MEEK TOWARDS OTHERS.

This is more difficult than towards events, because it seems as though *others* acted sometimes through *malice*.

But how frequently their actions are only the result of *temperament, egotism, thoughtlessness*—seeking *their own interest*, and never thinking of the harm they cause me. Then why should I be disturbed? I need only be forearmed.

Leave others perfectly free when there is no question of duty: try as much as possible never to be an obstacle to them; and, if they are an

obstacle to you *move around them*—do not clash against them.

Yield, submit, withdraw a little, give way; behold, the ordinary line of conduct to be pursued with the members of the family, and with those whom we call *our friends*.

The more liberty you allow them to do as they think right, the more you share the sentiment they have of their own importance, the more you withdraw to leave them free to follow their own path, the more they will leave you in peace and you can all the more easily be *useful to them*.

It is astonishing how the members of the family whom we do *not incommode* yield us an entrance to their souls.

Do not examine too minutely the actions of your friends, nor the motives which actuated them. If they

have acted with a want of delicacy, appear not to understand it: or what is more simple, think that it was a mistake on their part.

A sure means of overcoming a dislike which we entertain for any one is to *do him a little kindness every day*; and the way to overcome a dislike which another may feel towards us is to *say some little kind word of him every day*.

Are those about you wicked? You must doubtless take precautions, but be at peace: they will harm you no further than God has willed.

He who the raging floods controls,
Far beyond human ken,
Surely hath power supreme to check
The evil schemes of men.*

* Celui qui met un frein à la fureur des flots
Sait aussi des méchants arrêter les complots.

What does it cost God to arrest the effect of a calumny or slander? God is always the buckler with which I face events and creatures.

IV.

MEEK WITH MYSELF.

To be meek with self, is not to flatter oneself, to indulge oneself in all things, to excuse oneself on all occasions—but simply to encourage, to rouse, to fortify oneself.

To encourage oneself in an obscure *labor* which is weary and monotonous. ‘God wishes that I should perform it, and He sees me. This work occupies my mind, perfects my soul, and keeps me from evil.’

To encourage oneself during those sad hours of *universal abandonment*, when no one thinks of us, or gives us

the slightest mark of sympathy. "Is not the accomplishment of your duty sufficient for you? That is all God asks of you, and this duty will lead you to heaven."

To rouse oneself after a fall, a humiliating fault, a weakness which has overcome us: but rouse yourself kindly and affectionately. "Come, my poor soul, it is nothing: you are dealing with a good Father and generous Master. Humbling yourself, acknowledge your fault; and, while waiting the absolution of the priest, resume your ordinary life with the same energy."



To fortify oneself, against abandonment, against discouragement, against the neglect of others.

There are two things which are fortifying: *prayer* and *labor*.

There is one which rouses: *devotedness*.

These are remedies always within my reach.

II.

BE HUMBLE.

I.

HUMBLE TO GOD.

I. Living habitually in His presence like a *little child* or even like a *poor little dependant* asking, loving, waiting who knows that *nothing is due him*, but who knows also that every hour in proportion to his wants, the good God will send to him, and about him, all that he needs, and *something more*.

Live in peace under this fatherly

and merciful protection of Providence. The more you feel that you are weak, sick, humiliated, impotent, and wretched, even through your own fault, the more claim you have to the pity and love of the good God.

Only *pray well*: let your prayer be fervent, articulated a little slowly, sweet, and full of hope. The only possession of the poor is *prayer*; but this prayer, when it ascends humbly and appealingly to the heart of God, oh! with what fatherly love He hears it!

Do not have a great *variety of prayers*: let the *Our Father* frequently flow from your heart to your lips. Love, love to repeat to the good God this sweet *Our Father*, which Jesus himself has taught us to oblige himself in a measure never to repel us.

2. Look upon yourself as a *servant* whom the good God has *engaged*, and to whom He has promised a magnificent reward at the end of that day which is called life, and every morning place yourself at His disposition to do *all that He wills*, in the *manner He wills*, and *with the means which He places within your reach*.

The labor of each day will not be commanded you directly by the Master: it would be too sweet to yield obedience directly to God himself but by *deputies of the Master*. These deputies are called *superiors, equals, inferiors, even enemies*.

Each one has received unconsciously to himself the order to sanctify you: one by overcoming your love of independence, another by sub-

duing your pride, another by goading your slothfulness.

Each one of them, in transmitting the orders of God, will do it in his own way—sometimes rudely, sometimes maliciously sometimes in a way that is hard to bear. . . But what matters it to you provided you know that what you do, and what you suffer is God's will?

Perform your duty to the *best of your ability* to the *best of your knowledge*, and *as you are commanded*. From time to time say to God. *Master art Thou pleased?* and in spite of weariness, in spite of fatigue, in spite of repugnance, continue to the end.

Then, let praise or blame follow, you, poor and faithful servant, remain in peace.

II.

HUMBLE TO ALL.

Regard thyself sincerely as the *servant of all*, but do so without ostentation, and without even letting others suspect your intention.

Sometimes repeat softly those words of the Blessed Virgin, *Behold the hand-maid of the Lord*; and those others of Jesus Christ, *I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*: and conduct yourself towards those about you as if you really were *at their service*—obliging them, helping them listening to them, experiencing almost a feeling of confusion at what they do for you, and show that you are always pleased when they command anything of you.

Oh! if you knew the value of these

counsels in *merits* for heaven, in *joy* and *peace* on earth, how you would love them!

Oh! if you succeeded in allowing them to predominate in your life, in making them your rule of conduct, how happy you would be, and what happiness you would confer!

Happy in the testimony of your conscience, which would tell you, *You have done what Jesus would have done.*

Happy in the thought of the reward promised to him *who gives a glass of cold water in God's name.*

Happy, finally, in the assurance that *God will do for you what you shall have done for others.*

Oh! what matters, then, ingratitude, neglect, failure, or contempt itself! They would doubtless pain you,

but they could never discourage or sadden you.

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Precious counsels inspired by the Heart of Jesus, I bless you for all the good you have done me !

The first time your words fell upon my soul, they brought with *peace, strength* against discouragement, deception, abandonment, and a firm resolution to *live more devoutly, more united with God, more contented with all things, and to labor more earnestly for heaven.*

Once more I bless you !

Often, I promise you, I will come to read again your dear words at the foot of the altar, kneeling before the Holy Eucharist.

Precious counsels, enlighten, guard, and guide me !

XXII.

I have remarked, says Lacordaire that those who give themselves up to *their senses* are incapable, as it were, of feeling, or even understanding, *friendship*. One must be *pure* to love.

XXIII.

Did you read the gracious discussion which arose between three children on this simple question, *Which is the happiest day in life?*

They were three pupils in one of those religious houses where the child, far from the influence of the world, grows like a seed, being slowly impregnated with a vigorous sap; where it is transformed, purified, and becomes the grandest thing on earth — *an apostle!*

There, in that atmosphere of grace, there is nothing puerile, nothing small. Everything is great without ostentation, elevated without pretension, amiable without insipidity, serious without dullness.

Childhood and youth doubtless manifest themselves in ringing laughter and joyous sports; but their sports and laughter spring from the sunshine of their souls. They are the flowers of their hearts spring-time, the fresh glad perfumes of its innocence: there is nothing unworthy in them.

When you hear a child expressing with simplicity *an idea beyond his age*, be sure that that child was educated in a seminary or a profoundly Christian house. There, and there only, do they comprehend the grandeur of the word *education*.



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They were all three together under one of the arches which form the enclosure of the court.

"This morning we were told," said one of them, "that the day of one's first communion was the happiest day in one's life. Oh! how true that is! I will never be as happy as I was the day the good God came for the first time to repose in my heart! O that day!" . . . The child paused with emotion, his eyes filled with tears.

"There is a still happier day," said the second.

"Happier! Oh, no!" quickly replied the first. "And what would that day be?"

"The day when, as a priest, I will say my first mass, and when, before receiving Jesus Christ, I will hold him

in my hands for the first time, when offering him in sacrifice, and with an emotion which I already feel I can say to him, *My God!*”

“There is a happier day than those beautiful days,” said the third friend, simply.

The two children uttered a cry of surprise.

“No!” they exclaimed.

And he who had just spoken repeated, looking towards heaven:

“There is a happier day than those two days, though they are so beautiful.”

What, then, is that day? Is it the day of our death which permits the soul to become united with God for all eternity?

No!

Is it the day in which we take upon

ourselves those solemn vows and renounce the world forever?

No, no! What! my poor friends, you do not divine it? *It is the day of martyrdom.*

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Happy children! happy parents!
happy masters!

XXIV.

CONFRATERNITY OF AMIABILITY.

Under the patronage of Mary, Mother most amiable.

I.

Might I venture to ask the readers of the *Golden Sands* if they have preserved a recollection of those little leaves bearing the title, *Recipe for Becoming Amiable*; of those tracing the portrait of the *angel of little attentions*; finally, of others reproducing

the gracious page which we have entitled, *A Charming Confraternity!*

These few pages God has blessed in a special manner, as He blesses the little seeds which chance to fall on the roadside from the hands of the sower, and are borne by the wind to a little corner of neglected ground.

One day they were left in a family, and one of the children who glanced over them showed them to her brother, saying simply:

“Do you not wish we might be amiable? It is so good.”

“Yes; but it is so difficult.”

“Let us try.”

They tried, and it was *so good*, in fact, that their mother was astonished to hear more gentle answers, to see more delicate attentions, a more polite manner of speaking to the servants,

more cheerful countenances, contradictions quietly borne, impatience promptly controlled and, learning her children's resolution, joined with them, then the father followed in his turn, and then the servants.

They drew up a *little code of amiability*, after the ideas suggested by *Golden Sands*; they communicated it to a few intimate friends.

They made it known in a community which had charge of a large boarding-school, and soon in this little village there were more than a hundred persons voluntarily enrolled in what they styled the *confraternity of amiability*, whose greatest enjoyment was *giving pleasure* to those about them.

It is this charming idea which we wish to propagate, and which we hope

will be everywhere sympathetically received.

Certainly, what family would be other than happy to see enrolled in the *confraternity of amiability* that little circle of relatives and intimate friends who meet each evening around its hearth?

A gracious word, opportunely uttered, is no *trifle* in the matter of happiness; nor a kindly smile added to a suggestion, a slight uneasiness spared another, nor even an extra act of politeness.

II.

Listen, first, to the account given of one of these confraternities sent to a *band of first-communicants*:

“If you knew how our little people of the school have changed, and how decidedly their faults are banished!

“We are sometimes a little rude and hard to manage, but we all try earnestly to improve in our manners. Inexorable war then, against all brusqueness, impertinent answers, arguing replies. Bad habits will still show themselves sometimes: a companion asks you a favor; she is perhaps importunate; the first impulse is to repel her—no no. The teacher reprimands you, the rebellious spirit rises, but quickly comes the thought of the confraternity and the gentle answer, *I forgot, madam*, follows immediately and all is forgiven. We wish to allow our teachers to do all that they wish with us: to shape us, to mould us, and eradicate all that is displeasing in us, as well as to sow, implant, and cultivate virtue and good manners.

“Thanks to our efforts, and to St. Joseph, whom we have chosen as patron, not only has all incivility disappeared, but the greatest politeness prevails everywhere. We know how to present a book gracefully, soften the tone of our voices, and salute graciously. Delicacy of manner perhaps formerly neglected, is now earnestly studied and cultivated. Each one vies with her companion, not through self-love, but to honor our holy patron. The beginnings are imperfect—we are still rather awkward however, our teachers can already testify to a change. *Margaret* is more gentle; *Fane* scolds no more; *Caroline* is never fretful: in fine, everything goes as smoothly as clock-work. Consequently, in this state of things, the poor hapless reprimands will have

to go away and found a colony . . . where they like. Our efforts will not stop here: with the assistance of St. Joseph, the concurrence and advice of our good teachers, above all, with the grace of God, we will accomplish the double end of our efforts—*form ourselves to virtue while we are cultivating politeness.*”

III.

We appeal to families and communities: *Enroll yourselves in the confraternity of amiability!*

Amiability—that Christian amiability which has for its *device* the words of St. Paul, *I made myself all things to all men, to win them to Jesus Christ*; for its *model*, the Infant Jesus, who grew in grace before God and man; for protectress, the Blessed Virgin, invoked by the church under the gra-

cious title of *Mother most amiable*—
Amiability is *charity*, which gives itself; *humility*, which abases itself; *mortification*, which denies itself; *patience*, which endures; *strength*, which never wearies.

Amiability is the sunshine of the soul, which causes smiles to bloom on the lips, and expands the heart, as the rays of the sun open the buds of the rose.

Amiability is the kind word which revives, reanimates, consoles, and strengthens, as the dew revives, refreshes, and colors the withering plant.

Amiability is grace of manner, easy deportment, a peaceful countenance, the kindly glance which communicates itself even from one member of the family to all the others, as the perfume

of a single flower extends over all the meadow where it blooms.

Amiability is in its nature excessively contagious: with an amiable person we necessarily become amiable, or we fly from her and hide ourselves.

Amiability is not a virtue apart: either it supposes all other virtues, or the constant practice of it gradually attracts and preserves them in the amiable soul.

Children in families, devout souls in communities, enroll yourselves in the confraternity of amiability!

IV.

The basis of the *code of amiability*, and the *regulation of the confraternity*, are very simple.

We engage ourselves—

To smile habitually, even when we are alone, in order that a smile may become acclimated to our lips: it only suffices to labor and pray in the presence of the Infant Jesus, who smiles upon us from his Mother's arms. The Infant Jesus always smiles, even upon the guilty soul which returns to him.

Never to say *no* to an order given by a superior, or deny a service asked of us.

To spare others as much trouble as it is possible for us to spare them, without interfering with our duty.

Never to appear cross, or pouting, or vexed.

To suppress, the moment we perceive it, the least gesture which would indicate impatience.

Every morning to consider, before the good God, how we can give pleas-

ure to *such a person* with whom we live, to *another*, particularly one whom we dread a little, or who is not congenial to us.

Never to command an inferior without adding a kind, polite word.

Always to employ those little polite formulas which only cold, hard, selfish hearts find trifling: such as the *morning salutation*; the *good-night* at the end of the day; the *thank you* for the least little kindness; the expressions, *have the goodness, be so kind, you will give me a great deal of pleasure*, which should always preface a service asked; the gracious salutation of at least a smile when we meet.

To study the taste of those with whom we live, and gratify them as far as lies in our power; to respect their

eccentricities, and never to make *their whims* known.

Never to give an *advice*, above all a *reprimand*, unless we are perfectly calm, or without accompanying the counsel with kind words, if it is of a nature to wound.

To accuse ourselves with simplicity, if we have found that we have not been amiable, and to generously accept the reprimand which will be given us for it.

To have in our *prayer-books* a list of the *associates* in our family or community, and to read it every day before the Blessed Sacrament, adding this invocation: *My God, grant that we may love each other well! Mary, Mother most amiable, make us amiable as thou wast amiable.*

To assemble every Saturday in

families, and for a few moments, during the evening recreation in communities, to read over either this *little regulation*, or the *recipe for becoming amiable*, or the *angel of little attentions*; to mutually pardon any pain we may have involuntarily caused each other during the week; to renew our love for one another, and bind ourselves more closely to one another, under the protection of the *Infant Jesus* and *Mary, Mother most amiable*.

XXV.

“I complain because they inconvenience me; because they leave me alone; because they talk too much, or because they are silent. Thus, like an *old weather-vane*, I sigh with every wind. It is a *little oil* that I need to make the works run smoothly.”

Kneel down, poor soul; kneel very near the Heart of Jesus, and say to him softly, with a deep conviction of your poverty: *Jesus, meek and humble of heart, have mercy on me*, and you will feel that *drop of oil* which will restore your peace and calm.

XXVI.

THY WILL BE DONE.

These words are a sweet refuge prepared for us by the good God in the midst of this arid and weary desert which we call *life*.

They express the act of the child who lovingly casts himself into his father's arms to await the passage of the storm.

The act of the poor abandoned one, who, after long years of a sad and sol-

itary life, finds again his mother and cries to her, *Give me rest! Give me rest!*

The act of the exile who returns to the home of his first youth, and, beholding with emotion all that he has loved, can only repeat, *Here I wish to die!*

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words, heart broken by suffering and struggle, or still more cruelly torn by separation, and they will be to you a healing balm.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words, heart saddened by solitude and crushed by neglect, and they will be for you a consoling friend, a sustaining support, a loving heart which will remain always with you.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words, timid and anxious heart, uncertain of the path to follow, and knowing no longer of whom to seek counsel; and they will be to you a light which will guide you in the way to heaven.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words, loving heart who would save your dear ones from the fear which troubles them, or the misfortune which threatens them; in these words they will find a secure shelter, and the storm will pass without harming them.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Repeat these words with every breath, with every pulsation of your heart, with every movement of your

lips. God will always understand them *as you intend them*: sometimes as a *prayer*, as an *act of resignation*, as an act of *faith* in time of trouble, as an act of hope in time of fear—always as an *act of love*!

THY WILL BE DONE.

To Thee alone, O my God! can these words be addressed, for to Thee alone can we confide and abandon ourselves completely.

THY WILL BE DONE.

Yes, then, my God, Thy will be done! Thy will be done! I say it from the depths of my soul; and into the abyss of these supreme words I cast myself—my body, my soul, my whole being, and all that I love here below! *Thy will be done! Thy will be done!*

XXVII.

THE DROP OF DEW UPON THE SOUL.

Perhaps at the moment I am writing these lines, under the grateful impression of peace and love which has just reached my soul through *a pious thought, a little drop of dew*, which the good God sent in answer to my first cry, another soul cries, My God! —a soul in suffering, that suffering so terrible, *the suspense of a misfortune*, which we see slowly advancing, and which, humanly speaking, we know is inevitable.

Unquiet soul, permit another soul, *your sister*, to share with you the thought which God sent to console her. It is a word which escaped from a simple upright heart. Read at any

ordinary time, it would pass unnoticed: read through tears, it will bring you *strength* and *consolation*.

The religious of a monastery, at the time of our last troubles, were alarmed at the thought that a band of revolutionists, who had already plundered several monasteries, would probably plunder theirs.

There was a good simple lay brother who could not comprehend this alarm, and, when they endeavored to make him see the danger, he smilingly replied: *You are afraid of being plundered by these wicked people?*

But first of all God must will it.

And he added, If God wills it, would we not wish it?

These words need no comment: they are received with respect into the sanctuary of the soul. There we

softly repeat them and, under the influence of grace. we feel that they blossom, spreading hope, peace, and safety where fear, anxiety, and unrest prevailed.

Resume, resume your work which you have neglected a little; regulate again the hours of your life about which you have been remiss; recall to your lips a confident smile, and repeat slowly those sweet words: *If God wills it, why should I not will it?*

XXVIII.

THE ART OF REGULATING ONE'S WATCH AND ONE'S HEART.

It was *a mother* who suggested to us the subject of this page. Only *a mother* could find anything so ingenious.

You are happy, are you not, my child—very happy in the possession of the rich, brilliant little *watch* which your father has given you? You smilingly listen to its monotonous ticking; your eyes follow with solicitude its two frail hands which keep on in the path traced for them, each one according to its strength, but both with a regularity and constancy which astonishes you; and you would feel very badly if an accident arrested its course and silenced the little noise that seems to tell you that there is life in your charming little trinket.

Do you wish, my child, to preserve in all its strength and regularity, this watch, the precious souvenir of your father?

Hear and follow my counsels:

1. Be faithful to wind it every day

at about the same hour; and, in order that you may remember it, regularly choose the time before going to bed, when you take it off and put it by your pillow.

2. Do not lay it on marble or any too cold body. The sudden change of temperature might break the spring, and the motion of your watch would suddenly stop.

3. Be careful to keep the gold case which covers the works hermetically closed: the least grain of dust, the softest particle would be sufficient to clog the wheels and make it irregular.

4. From time to time, particularly when you notice that it is a little fast or a little slow, bring your watch to the watch-maker: perhaps it needs a drop of oil or some slight repair.



You are very happy, are you not, my child, in the possession of the rich, brilliant little *watch* which your father has given you? But have you reflected that your Father in heaven has given you a present more precious than a *gold watch*? Like your *watch*, it has a continuous and monotonous movement, regulated by your thoughts, your desires, your actions, as the spring of the watch directs the hands whose movements you are so fond of watching.

This present is your *heart*; and it is I, your mother, who, up to this moment, has preserved it pure and innocent; it is I who have preserved it from all dust, who have encompassed it with that minute care

which only a mother is capable of bestowing. Behold why, my child, your thoughts are so pure, your desires so good, and your actions so wise.

But you are going to leave your mother, and to you, you alone is confided the guardianship of your heart.

O! guard, guard it with the same care that you preserve your *gold watch*, and to that end hear and follow my counsels:

I Every day about the same hour be faithful to *raise* your heart above earthly things. The heart's place is not this earth, where the senses allure it more or less during the hours of labor. its place is *above*, in that region where God shows Himself more intimately, where He speaks more

clearly, where He gives strength for the struggle.

To raise one's heart is, in a measure, to bring it to the *height of God*: it is the daily morning and evening prayer which must make it ascend to Him, saying, *Lead me, Lord!*

2. Be careful to preserve your heart from contact with those *selfish hearts* to whom the word devotion has no meaning; those *sensual* hearts who only aspire after the pleasures of the senses; those *proud, disdainful* hearts who have extinguished in themselves every sentiment of respect and submission.

These perfidious friends would break or injure the spring which permits you to raise your heart to God, and to comprehend the happiness of charity, chastity, and obedience.

3. Energetically keep from it those *insipid, affected, moving, or exciting books* which leave in the heart extravagant thoughts, foolish reveries, desires of knowledge, and of making self known, which arrest all generous sentiments.

Much more delicate than the wheels of the watch are the *wheels* of the heart.

4. From time to time, bring your heart to one of those men whom God has invested with His power and light and whom you call *priests*. Open it frankly to him: he will regulate any deviation which your imprudence may have caused, he will strengthen what may be weakened; above all, he will repair what may be injured by contact with a wicked and impious world.

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And when you, my child, are called, you will be happy to show your earthly father and your Father in heaven that you have preserved the *watch* and the *heart* which they gave you, in all their splendor and purity.

XXIX.

APOSTLESHIP IN THE FAMILY.

Little leaf, glide to-day, glide silently into the chamber of the young girl, and place yourself before the picture of her first communion, where, as spotless as on that blessed day, hangs the white wreath which recalls to her its innocence, and where she kneels in prayer every morning.

There, softly, so that even her

mother may not hear, whisper these words: *expiation, sacrifice!*

These words contain mysteries which can only be understood by those innocent souls to whom almost daily communion is a need as pressing as the repast of each day, and who are ill at ease in the midst of all that the world calls *luxury*, when they do not find an atmosphere of God about them.

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Expiation and sacrifice! That dream of all chosen souls is the compact between God and the soul, by which it promises to take upon itself all the chastisements merited by another, and God promises in His turn to bring this other soul, so generously loved, to repentance, to tears, to love.

Expiation and sacrifice! The gen-

erous gift which a soul makes of a life which might yet be a long, happy one, to redeem the hours that another soul has stolen from God, or to extend the days of one who is useful to the Church.

Expiation and sacrifice! The act of the soul which renounces here below her portion of pure joys, sweet happiness, and tender affection, to expiate the guilty joys and perhaps criminal pleasures of another soul that is dear to her, and whom she would lead to heaven.



Expiation and sacrifice are always a secret between God and the soul; . . . but later, in heaven, how touching will

be the meeting between father and daughter—the child who died at eighteen in the happy spring-time of her life. She will say to him, holding out her arms, *Father, I waited for thee. God took my life for the salvation of thy soul.* .

How touching will be the gratitude of each one who finds that he owes his salvation to the invalid who accepted ten years of suffering, of neglect, of humiliation, to preserve him innocent, or to win him back to repentance.

Happy families, happy communities, happy souls whom another loves sufficiently to take their portion of chastisements upon himself, and, by his prayers and his suffering, bring them back to God, or preserve them in piety.

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One day in a familiar instruction a priest said, "Do you wish to convert a family? Bring in its midst a soul who knows how to suffer.

"Do you wish to win back to God a soul that is dear to you? Suffer for it."

These words were heard by a little peasant who had just made her first communion. How could she comprehend them? God knows the secret of it.

The poor child had often seen her mother weep and blush with shame when, almost every evening, her father came home, stupefied with wine.

On the day when the efficacy of suffering was revealed to her, she said to her mother, embracing her

with an effusive tenderness which thrilled the poor wife: "Mother, be happy: father will soon cease to make you weep."

And the next day, at the noon meal—the only one which brought the family together—she took some porridge with a piece of bread, and refused anything more.

"Are you sick?" said the mother, with astonishment.

"No, mother."

"Eat, then!" said the father.

"Not to-day, father."

They believed it a whim, and thought to punish the child by leaving her pouting unnoticed.

In the evening the father returned, as usual, intoxicated. The child, who had gone to bed, but had not slept, heard him swearing and began to cry.

It was the first time *oaths* had made her weep.

The next day, like the preceding, at dinner, she refused everything but bread and water.

The mother became uneasy, the father angry.

"I wish that you should eat," said he, angrily.

"No!" replied the child, firmly; "not as long as you will become intoxicated, swear, and make my mother cry. I have promised the good God, and *I wish to suffer that He may not punish you.*"

The father hung his head. That evening he returned home quietly, and the little one was charmingly bright and winning, and no longer refused to eat.

But habit again overcame the father. The child's fast recommenced.

This time the father could say nothing: a large tear rolled down his cheek, and he ceased to eat. The mother also wept; the child alone remained calm.

Rising from the table, he clasped his little daughter in his arms, saying: "Poor martyr! will you always do thus?"

"Yes, father; till I die, or you are converted."

"My child, my child! I will never more give your mother cause to weep."

XXX.

"My God! close my eyes, preserve me from the sight of that crowd which raises in me thoughts so bitter and discouraging. Grant, that in trav-

ersing this multitude, I may be deaf to its noise, inaccessible to the impressions which assault me: and, to this end place before my eyes an *image, a vision of the things I love—a field, a valley, a flower*—something of *nature*, to recall the home of my loved ones."

This beautiful prayer was Maurice de Guérin's, during his sojourn in Paris. Poor exile—and he who is obliged to live even a few days away from those he loves is always *more or less an exile*—what absent one would not find a charm in repeating this prayer?

Repeat it, my poor heart: repeat it all.

Invoke those sweet visions of the family hearth—an aged mother, devoted friends; live, act as if they were always with you: and sometimes, to

encourage yourself in your labor, and to render the joy of success more sweet, say softly, *Ah! if my mother, if my friend were to see me!* and to withhold yourself on the brink of evil, say again, *Oh! if my mother, if my friend were to see me!*

XXXI.

THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.

Along the road which leads to *eternal life*, God, in His mercy, has placed for those who *ascend* it two kinds of *stations*, where all must pause a greater or shorter time; and these stations the travelers find more frequent according as they themselves approach the end

One is the *Eucharist*—the strength which encourages and sustains, the

food which revives, the hope which reassures.

The other is the *cross* — sorrow which wearies, which wounds, which crushes, but which purifies.

O! you, children, still at the entrance of life, whose sky is so pure, whose hours are so balmy—you will hardly understand this page written for your mothers, your sisters, for us all, whom more than once you have surprised with tearful eyes: but preserve it piously; one day it will console you as it has consoled us.

It is for you, poor desolate ones, who, at this hour, with a bleeding heart, with a soul almost without love, without light, find yourself pausing at the *station of the cross*, and sending forth, like Jesus, that cry of the heart, so bitter, though so re-

signed: *My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?*

Listen to the following; it came from the moved heart of a bishop, and was carefully gathered from his lips:

O Jesus! what is this faithful group who stand at the foot of thy cross?

It is *Mary*, thy mother; *John*, the beloved disciple; *Magdalen*, those who loved thee best, and whom thou didst love most on earth. . . . And behold what thou hast chosen for them! Thou has placed them close to thy cross—*juxta crucem*. Thou hast placed them standing—*Stabat Mater* . . . yes, standing! In thy inflexible tenderness thou didst exact that they should be a reflection of thyself in firmness as well as in sorrow.

Thou didst not consider that they

were women, and therefore weak and tender; that it was a man, young and little accustomed to wrestle with great sorrow.

Thou didst not allow their heavy hearts to overcome their courage, prostrating them to the earth in sorrow.

Thou didst not even permit to their sorrow the support of the cross, which cost them so dear. No, they must stand—*stantes*! Standing under thy cross, standing at thy feet, losing not the sound of one writhing muscle, of one drop of thy blood which fell on the hard ground; . . . nor, when thy last hour came, one trembling sigh of thy unequal breath oppressed by death.

Juxta Crucem. . . . O Jesus! thus dost thou treat those who are dear to thee! . . .

Associating them in the noble work of redemption, Thou dost retrace in them Thine image; and if sometimes, Lord—for they are but men, and Thou knowest the clay of which Thou hast formed us—if sometimes they fail under the weight of sorrow, under the bitterness of Thy apparent abandonment, the most cruel of all, then, bending to the ear of their hearts, and bringing to the mirror of their thoughts that group of the cross, Thou dost softly whisper, in those powerful, world-moving accents which belong to Thee alone: *I crucify Thee; therefore, I love Thee!*

O my God! how couldst Thou so transform our nature as to offer it suffering as a proof of love, and therefore desirable?

How hast Thou said to carnal, pleas-

ure-loving man: *I crucify thee; therefore, I love thee!* without his rising, in the strength of his free will, against Thee? Oh! it is because Thou hast first loved us unto *the crucifixion of all Thyself; barbarous crucifixion of all Thy body* by physical tortures; a *cruel crucifixion of Thy heart* by the wickedness of man and the abandonment of God; *crucifixion of Thy soul* by the divine foreknowledge of so many poor, foolish ones who would not profit by Thy death.

And as love seeks always to blend those it loves in a perfect harmony of position and sentiment, Thou, laying upon us the hand of love—of love which is inflexible, like all strong things—dost whisper, *I crucify thee; therefore, I love thee!*

And Thou dost add, Behold, Mary,

my Mother, behold my beloved disciple, behold Magdalen: whilst with my failing breath, in accents which thrilled all three, I prayed for my executioners, and I had merciful promises for the good thief, *for them* I had only silence, or in place of affectionate sentiments that cold expression, *Woman, behold thy Son.*

Yes; but to their hearts, which were united to mine in an ineffable communion of sorrow and love, I said, with every vibration, *I crucify thee; therefore, I love thee!*

And you also, my elect — elect through suffering and trial — pause not in the thorny path I have set for you; turn not from the cup I present you; above all, complain not that I forget you, and abandon you in sorrow and desolation; believe not that

your martyrdom escapes my regard, or that I am indifferent to it. No, a thousand times no! You suffer, you weep, you are in agony perhaps! . . . but listen: *I crucify thee; therefore, I love thee!*

But you who follow the road of Calvary, pleading, after my example, for the salvation of souls, keep on, keep ever on; tarry not, weary not. Bargain not with me a sacrifice which I can demand of you.

Walk courageously on, with your eyes ever fixed upon me, crucified at the summit, and upon my dearly beloved ones at my feet.

Complete your day's work, industrious, generous workmen; and, if the reward is not given you before the end of your labor, be sure that you

will find it at your awakening on the morrow.

My attention is fixed upon you, and I will not frustrate your touching hopes. *I crucify thee; therefore, I love thee.*

XXXII.

HOW GOD FORGES A SOUL.

The author of the following poetry simply entitled it the *History of a soul*: we substitute a line of the last verse as the title.

It seems to us that it better expresses the doctrine contained in its beautiful lines—a *rude* doctrine, but one which makes *strong souls*.

That celebrated saying of a great captain, *We only lean upon that which resists*, is also the expression of God's

design for souls. He needs souls
finely tempered.

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Sometimes a soul from out the crowd *
Is chosen by the loving God,
And led to Him, with spirit bowed,
And chastened by the chastening rod.

He chose her for her modest worth ;
And for her dower He has decreed
A shrinking pride that is of earth,
And tenderness that still must bleed.

He makes her of the friendless few ;
And, held within the ranks obscure,

* Dans la foule, secrètement,
Dieu parfois prend une âme neuve,
Qu'il veut amener lentement
Jusqu'à lui, d'épreuve en épreuve.

Il la choisit pour sa bonté,
Et lui donne encore en partage
La tendresse avec la fierté,
Pour qu'elle saigne davantage.

Il la fait pauvre, sans soutien,
Dans les rangs obscurs retenue ;

Unknown, she seeks the good and true—
Unknown, despised, but ever pure.

He bends beneath incessant woe
The feeble body where she dwells,
And feeds her with the tears that flow
From sorrow's unsuspected wells.

He sends each day, to further prove
Her constancy, a harder fate ;
And bids her suffer through her love,
And by injustice, and by hate.

His rigor sleeps not. Does the soul
Await in peace ? This peace He breaks.

Cherchant le vrai, voulant le bien,
Pure toujours—et méconnue.

Il fait plier sous les douleurs
Le faible corps qui l'emprisonne ;
Il la nourrit avec des pleurs
Que nulle autre âme ne soupçonne

Il lui suscite chaque jour,
Pour l'éprouver, une autre peine ;
Il la fait souffrir par l'amour,
Par l'injustice et par la haine.

Jamais sa rigueur ne s'endort,
L'âme attend la paix ? il la trouble ;

She struggles ? Lo, a heavier dole !
 Resigned ? A double woe she takes.

He strikes and wounds, with certain stroke,
 Through all her loved ones ; and her fate
 He shrouds beneath a cruel cloak,
 And makes her life a sad debate.

In toil she lives, condemned, though frail,
 The weight of its rude law to feel.
 He hardens her, like gleaming mail,
 And tempers her as tempered steel.

Unbending Judge, He seeks to know
 If, through the storm, unto the end,

**Elle lutte ? il frappe plus fort ;
 Elle se résigne ? il redouble.**

**Il la blesse d'un coup certain
 Dans chacun des êtres qu'elle aime,
 Et fait de son cruel destin
 Un mélancolique problème !**

**A la rude loi du travail
 Il la condamne, ainsi frappée ;
 Il la durcit comme un émail,
 Il la trempe comme une épée.**

Juge inflexible, il veut savoir
 Si, jusqu'au bout, malgré l'orage,

She will in duty's pathway go,
Nor let her lasting courage bend.
And on the final day, meanwhile,
Beholding still her courage whole,
He greets her with a loving smile.
'Tis thus that God doth forge a soul.

It has been said, perhaps a little severely, but with truth, that a man who has lived and died in prosperity is a *fool whom Providence knew not what to do with.*

It has treated him as physicians do their sick, of whom they expect nothing, and whose recovery they see is hopeless—they allow them everything

Elle accomplira son devoir
Sans démentir ce long courage.
Et s'il la voit, au dernier jour,
Sans que sa fermeté réclame,
Il lui sourrit avec amour
C'est ainsi que Dieu forge une âme !

—*Manuel*

that flatters their appetites; but those, on the contrary whom they know strong and generous, and of whom they expect signal service, they deprive of everything which, too agreeable to the taste, might interfere with the re-establishment of the health.

Man's value is in proportion to what he *has known how to suffer*: as the value of the steel blade is in proportion to the tempering it has undergone.

XXXIII.

A SIMPLE PRAYER.

O Mary! O Mother so happy in heaven! in the midst of thy joys, forget not the sorrows of earth.

Have pity on those who love each other, and whom God has submitted to the hard trial of separation!

Have pity upon that isolation of heart so full of sadness, so full of discouragement, and sometimes of terror!

Have pity on those who struggle against the difficulties of life, and who are on the point of yielding to discouragement, and perhaps to neglect of duty!

Have pity on those who have much to wish for, in loved ones allured by the world, and yet unchastened by misfortune!

Have pity on those who have received from God a greater share than others of tenderness of heart and delicacy of sentiment!

Have pity on those who have ceased to love us, and never reproach them with the pain they cause us!

Have pity on those who have gradually abandoned prayer, the Eucha-

rist; who have lost their peace of heart, and weep in secret, without courage to return again to God!

Have pity upon those we love; make them holy, O Mary! even shouldst thou make them suffer! If they should ever wander from thee, oh! take, take all my joys, and, by the attraction of happiness, keep them near Jesus.

Have pity upon those who weep, upon those who pray, upon those who know not how to make themselves loved!.

To all, O Mary! give hope and peace!

XXXIV.

"Would you like a *useful thought* for your *Golden Sands?*" was asked us one day by one of those devoted women who have taken the sweet

name of *lady of charity*. Perhaps I am going to commit an indiscretion ; but the angel of the poor will easily obtain pardon for me, and who knows if he may not even make use of my revelations to attract new assistance for his loved ones.

I went yesterday to the house of Mme. de C. The hour was rather early, it is true ; but I know well that I can present myself at any hour to Mme. de C., particularly when I go to speak to her of her poor.

About to knock at the door, I paused, surprised to hear a regular monotonous sound like a *sewing-machine*.

I knocked, and, entering quickly, found Mme. de C. seated before a *real machine*, and working, working most industriously.

She blushed a little on perceiving

me, and rose immediately. "Ah! indiscreet one!" she exclaimed, extending her hand, and receiving me with that kind smile which comes from a cheerful heart and soul.

"Indiscreet, yes; but let us see: since when have *you hired by the day?*"

"*Hired by the day to the good God?* Hardly two months ago. But sit down and I will tell you all about it.

"Do you not find, my good friend, that we are *sluggards?* Because in the morning we superintend our households, occupy ourselves with the children when they are not at boarding-school, visit a few poor, give them a little of our surplus wealth, we believe ourselves *perfect women*.

"Well, two months ago, my conscience reproached me at the sight of

a little work-woman, who labors regularly *ten hours a day*, and yet comforts almost as many poor as we do, and recites as many prayers.

“And this *remorse of conscience*—seed cast by the good God into my soul—blossomed into a thought which I eagerly welcomed.

“I bought this sewing-machine. I get up a little earlier in the morning, and every day I impose upon myself, either in the morning or the evening, or at different times during the day, the task of working two hours for the benefit of the poor.

“Look!” she added, “the work of the last two months;” and she opened a wardrobe, where I saw several outfits for little children. “Behold the result of my *hired days*, and the



Christmas presents I have to distribute among the poor."

"But the money?"

"I understand. The money given for the machine would have bought twice that amount of clothes, true; but, my dear, *a little egotism* is admissible, even in charity. Did I not have to think of my soul? And think you that labor adds not to the perfection which charity gives it?"

"Come, my good friend, set yourself to work; *buy a machine*; your poor, your soul, your heart will profit by it."

XXXV.

A SCHOOL-GIRL'S DREAM.

It was very cold; the wind moaned through the leafless trees in the court.

I was warmly *tucked* in bed, and I



remember I murmured a prayer as I thought of the many poor little children, less fortunate than I, who were suffering and weeping at this hour.

And I thought I saw advancing an old man, bending under a heavy mantle of snow which enveloped him: he had a crown of icicles on his head, and rings of hoar-frost on every finger, and his lips were blue.

As he walked, there fell from his mantle, from his long beard, and from his hands flakes of snow which accumulated in a white heap around my couch.

“Who are you?” I cried, trembling with cold and terror.

“Do not be alarmed, little one,” replied the old man, slowly. “I am Winter, and I came this evening to make my entrance in the school be-

fore going through the streets and other dwellings."

As he spoke his icy breath reached me and chilled me. I paid no attention to it; and, calling to mind the prayer I had said before sleeping for the unfortunate, I joined my trembling hands and said to him :

"Oh! as you are here, *Lord Winter*, let me plead with you, not for us who have warm clothing and fires in our class-rooms, but for those who want for everything. *Lord Winter*, do not be too severe.

"Hear not those who ask a great deal of snow, in order to display their handsome furs.

"Hear not those who ask for a sharp and biting atmosphere, simply with the vain desire of seeing large

fires burning on their hearths, and of giving brilliant soirées.

“Think of the garrets without fire, where a poor widow courageously works night and day.

“Think of the bed destitute of covering, where a poor, sick old man shivers with cold.

“Think of the poor consumptives, with their weary cough, to whom the cold does so much harm.

“Spare the little children in the street, singing their little songs, and holding out hands red and swollen with the frost.

“Spare also the good God’s little birds who die of cold.”

The old man smilingly replied:

“Alas! alas! child; my route is traced, and my mission fixed, in ad-

vance. The grain of wheat waits my coming to ripen in the earth, which I cover with snow : the tree calls me to destroy the insects which in the spring would destroy its roots ; the atmosphere itself asks that I should purify it from the miasmas of summer : and it is to repair the involuntary evil caused by my passage that I have come to you."

And his stiff hand drew aside the curtain of the future, and I saw a profusion of brilliant things—books, toys, bonbons—above which I read these words: *Christmas presents for the poor.*

But the clock struck, and I awoke with a start, and my first thought was, *Yes, yes ; I will share my Christmas presents with the poor and the sick.*

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At times the best I have to offer the good God is *my night*; in the evening I offer it to Him that every pulsation of my heart may be for Him.

In placing my watch under my pillow, I lay *my heart* in spirit in the *Heart of Jesus*, and during seven hours it is His without interruption. Alas! during the day does not my poor heart give itself to any one who may claim it?

Every evening I repeat, *My God while I sleep may my heart watch.* — In the morning should we not say, *My God while I am awake and occupied may my heart rest in Thee.*

XXXVI.

TO BE SET ASIDE.

It is a sad, a very sad thought!

That it may not crush the heart, filling it with bitterness, it must be meditated before the crucifix.

O Jesus, Jesus! *set aside*, during the long hours of thy passion, and still so unknown and despised in thy eucharistic life, let me, let me look upon, and contemplate calmly and quietly, that terrible position which perhaps you reserve for me one day.

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To be set aside is to feel convinced that no one thinks of us, that no ray of affection reaches us, that we are abandoned in a corner as useless to every one: as we leave in an isolated

room a piece of furniture which has long been in service and is now useless—we know not how to be rid of it.

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To be set aside is to feel that we are useless for anything, not even worthy to be consulted sometimes: like old pamphlets which we have read and now reject because they weary us.

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To be set aside is to feel reduced to silence and inaction in a house which was formerly filled with our work—either because our strength has diminished, our mind is less clear, or simply because we have lost the prestige which surrounded us through the kindness of a superior, or the office we filled.

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To be set aside is to see gradually disappearing, day by day, *that prestige* which surrounded us as a soft, sweet halo—that sympathy which brought about us smiles and kindness; and to see those we simply called and believed friends gradually withdrawing from us, one by one.

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Oh! what must be the anguish of the poor heart which has preserved its power of devotion and love, and to whom God has sent the hard trial of being *set aside*!

Know you not of such hearts about you, who weep silent tears, and whom, perhaps, through habit, you pass by with indifference?

The *old and the infirm*, chained to

the fireside, who doubtless want for nothing in a material sense but who are never gladdened by the least mark of affectionate tenderness, who are made to retire under the pretext of repose when preparations for a festival are required, and who more than once have believed that they read in the glances of those they have so dearly loved these hard words. *Thou tarryest very long*

Forsaken ones in families, in communities who are scarcely spoken to who are overburdened with labor, who are always found fault with, who never receive a kind word—because they do not please, because they have faults of character which prevent any lasting affection, because they are suspected. . . .

Guilty ones, whom repentance justi

fied before God, but could not reinstate in the opinion of men.

Calumniated ones upon whom God has left all the appearance of evil and whom men avoid as they would one infected with the plague.

Oh! if there are such about you go, go sometimes to give them the alms of a glance, a word or a simple pressure of the hand.

Remain a few moments seated at their side and to afford them a little joy delicately make them understand that they are *still useful*.

Believe it, they have received from God a mission of salvation for those about them



And you, poor *forsaken ones* with scarcely courage to show the wound of your heart, and more frequently

with no one to whom you can confide it look above raise your tearful eyes to heaven and send forth that cry which came from a bleeding heart like yours. *O Jesus, Jesus! thou thou dost not set me aside!*

No dear forsaken ones: God does not *cast you aside*: the more others forsake you, the nearer He draws to you:

. Refrain from all complaints To appease the inevitable murmurs of nature, say sometimes, *My trial is hard; but I need it, since God has sent it.*

And in more painful hours when your sore heart will cry. *Who now thinks of me?* listen to your angel guardian. *Who thinks of thee poor soul? God, the Blessed Virgin, the angels—all in heaven think of thee always.*

XXXVII.

To listen kindly is often an act of the most delicate interior mortification, and helps us very much to speak kindly ourselves.

XXXVIII.

LOVE YOUR ROOM.

“Thy cell if thou continue in it grows sweet ; but if thou keep not to it it becomes tedious and distasteful. If in the beginning of thy conversion thou accustom thyself to remain in thy cell, and to keep it well it will be to thee afterwards a dear friend and a most agreeable delight

These words of the *Imitation* seem at first sight, to be written for religious ’ says the Abbé Pereyve but

studied more closely, they apply to all souls."

Yes, *to all souls!*

Among the readers of the *Golden Sands*, who has not a *little nook* to himself—a simple little work-room; a solitary little study devoted to intellectual labor; a cell, more or less spacious where he feels more at home to labor, to pray, to suffer, to take at least a few hours' repose, and sometimes to weep?

Whatever this *little nook* may be, be friendly to it. If you love it, it will love you: and understand it well, you have more need of it than it has of you.

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"First of all, enter your room without bitterness and in a peaceful spirit."

Already some one fills it with His presence, and waits you there, to ask you to accept Him as your Host and Friend. It is the *good God*.

Will you not cordially greet this Divine Host, who wishes to be the *Companion of your room*? An act of love is so easy and so sweet. Then let your lips, or rather your heart, murmur softly to God, on entering your room, *Thou art welcome!*

You would hardly believe how much the simple act of entering your room softly with a *smile on your lips* embellishes and brightens it!

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Treat it however poor and narrow it may be like a person with whom you are going to live, and whose friendship you seek to win: love to

adorn it a little, and always keep it in order.

In good order it will please you more; and if dark, it will appear lighter; if small, it will seem larger; poor, it will have the adornment of the poor, and that is the only one you should wish for it.

A luxuriously furnished room is rarely susceptible of intimacy: it attracts the crowd and noise; the mind may be amused there for a short time, but the heart and soul are never at ease there.

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Behold, you are in your room. Do you not feel about you a soft, sweet atmosphere? It is the smile of the good God, which radiates strength, energy, constancy, consolation, and peace.

Your room, which you have adorned, knows you; and, like a friend, it offers you all that will make the hours that you spend in it agreeable. It presents hosts, known to you, called *memories*.

Memories of a spot where you have long been accustomed to seat yourself at your work; of another where you have so often knelt to pray.

Memories of that piece of furniture bought with your gradual savings, or bequeathed by a loving heart that has gone to the good God.

Memories of that pious picture and that old book which you received from a friend, and in which his hand traced words which always move you.

Memories of those working utensils, the companions of your solitude and

the support of your material existence.

Memories and hopes at the sight of that crucifix before which you have shed so many tears, to which you have confided so many secret troubles, and which always seemed to say: *Courage! I am here, the witness of thy labor, of thy trials, of thy fidelity!*

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How could you but love and be happy in a room that does so much for you?

Love it, love it! and, after the chapel which is the *room of Jesus*, enter no where so willingly as you do into *your own room!*

XXXIX.

The best *protected* life is the one which is protected by *suffering*.

XL.

When I walk I always look *above*, never *below*. I must always have heaven before my eyes; otherwise, I see trouble.

XLI.

GOD AND I.

Listen to the charming words which a mother surprised on the lips of her children.

They were two, a brother and sister, seated before an open book. The little brother wearily regarded the page which he was to learn by heart, and the sister, a little older, seated at his side with some sewing in her hand, was charged to urge him to his task.

“Come, study, Paul!”

"Oh! do you not see, I can't! . . . But it's not my fault; I can do nothing when I am not in the *humor*."

"Not in the humor! Then you should put yourself in the humor."

"I do not know how."

"Because you wish to work *all alone*."

"How, *all alone*?"

"Yes; *without the good God*. Oh! it is very wrong to withdraw the good God from all that we do! It is the way now, it seems: but it is a very bad way. Good papa says that nothing, absolutely nothing, either in the family or in the country, should be done without God. Vainly would we appear to succeed; it would be like erecting a column, without first putting a large stone to support it: it would all fall."

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No, we are never in *the humor* when we are *alone* ; and, however sweet life may be in a material sense, if it be passed in isolation, it is habitually sad.

We need a companion in our *labors*, our *joys*, our *sufferings* our *thoughts* ; we must *live jointly* ; we must labor with some one, and, above all, for some one. Then labor is more useful, suffering lighter, and joy more intense.

Oh! why not make God this *Companion* which we need so much?

Behold the practical results of accepting God as the *habitual Companion of our lives*.

God is not a purely *ideal* Being. He permits us to draw *near* to Him, as to a *person* with whom we may

have continual relations: and this person is a *Friend* whom we know to be *kind, true, devoted, and powerful*: a Friend who, every moment, will answer our appeal, and who will say to us, even in a sensible manner, *I am here*; a Friend, who, according to the intensity of our love for Him and our attention to Him, will *protect, inspire, and guard* us, who will act in us, and about us, with great delicacy, and who, if we accept Him as *Master*, will, with all the solicitude of a mother for her child, make us kind, amiable, and virtuous.

We feel this; we understand it. . . . Then why have we not chosen God as the *Companion of our lives*?

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Why? Because we also feel that

this Companion exacts *duties towards Him*.

Duties of politeness, which oblige us to listen to Him ; to do nothing voluntarily which is displeasing to Him ; to be exact to the hours He has assigned us ; to finish, with minute care, the different works commanded us in His name by our neighbor or superiors.

Duties of gratitude, which oblige us to *thank* Him for the benefits which, every day and almost every moment, He sends us by creatures who are His messengers, and whom He tells to render us service, to be agreeable to us, and to aid us.

Duties of confidence, which oblige us to undertake nothing without consulting Him ; to rely without fear upon His assistance ; to bear with the obstacles

and difficulties which He permits, feeling sure that they are necessary; to calmly wait the *end* of what seems hard and painful; and, above all, never to murmur against Him.

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Oh! who will refuse—at the price of the light obligations which these duties impose—to accept as the *Companion of his life* Him whom we call *the good God*?

And *this God* only asks to *be called*.
Come! my God, come!

XLII.

Why should I be troubled? The good God, by means of Rebecca, well knew how to have Jacob blessed instead of Esau. If the good God wishes that *I* should do this good

work—that *I* should be chosen for this employment—that *I* should obtain *that charge*, when I have simply done all that I should do, why can I not wait in peace? God will know well how to find me, and bring about the end He desires.

XLIII.

Once more! once more! for souls go, *glean*—go, *gather*—go, *cull*—go, *ask*. Renew these provisions, so quickly exhausted, which sustain us on the route.

There are times when the soul needs not a *long page*, but a *simple thought*.

Exhausted, it has not the strength to *read*—it may only glance: a thought's read at a glance.

Pressed by trial, it has not time to *search*; it can only seize whatever

presents itself; a thought is always accessible.

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At this hour when I feel alone, depressed and discouraged, when every one seems to abandon me, and with reason. . . . *there is one heart which loves me*, and which loves me dearly: I know it, I am sure of it. It is thy Heart, O Jesus! . . . and at this thought I could not but smile, even in the midst of tears.

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Sink not, my poor heart! This failure, which so deeply humiliates you, that sharp word which has just been addressed to you; that disdainful glance which you detected; that ingratitude which paralyzes your devotion; that material fault which cre-

ates such an unfavorable impression of you, . . . all these the fatherly hand of God has made to softly penetrate you as a *remedy* for a hidden evil which you saw not. Endure, wait, and submit.

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Two words which fill life with devotion and peace: *Ecce!* *Fiat!*

1. *Ecce!* Behold me!

God seeks some one for His work. O my God! I am here! Behold me, ready to *labor*; have me commanded what Thou wilt, as Thou wilt, and by whom Thou wilt!

Behold me, ready to *suffer*, on the part of whom Thou wilt, what Thou wilt, and as long as Thou wilt.

Behold me ready to *bear with* that event, that humiliation, that person, that position, that employment.

Behold me, ready to be *humbled* in my reputation, in my work, in my family, in my intellect!

Behold me, ready to be *forgotten* as long as Thou wilt, by whom Thou wilt, in the manner Thou wilt.

2. *Fiat!* I accept it!

Oh! yes, with all my will, and in spite of the repugnance of my senses, of my mind, of my heart; in spite of the cries of my self-love, of my sensitiveness, of all my nature.

Fiat, to all that I may receive!

Fiat, to all that may try me!

Fiat, to all that I may fear!

Considering eternity, is it not a great honor that God should deign to choose me *to do something* worthy of Him?

It is not important for my soul, for my perfection, for my sanctification,

that *I should be pleased with such a person; that the labor imposed upon me should be to my liking, to my taste; that nothing should thwart me; but simply that I should please the persons with whom I live; that I should accomplish the labor imposed upon me; that I should peacefully bear with all that thwarts me.*

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Oh! if I let God do, first of all, *to my soul*, then *with my soul*, all that He wills, how useful I would be for His glory! Was it not thus the saints acted? They allowed themselves to be moulded by God: and in His divine hands they became those pliant *instruments* and powerful means with which He effected the wonders that we see in souls. A saint is in a measure the *hand of God*.

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Rise, rise, O my soul! to God: with Him we feel less all that pains, that irritates and disturbs us!

Rise, rise, O my soul! to God: with Him, neither jealousy, sensitiveness, or vain-glorious desires ever reach us.

Rise, rise, O my soul! to God: with Him we find, first, resignation, then love, then peace.

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And is *that* what disturbs you, my poor heart? To-morrow, you may have forgotten it; to-morrow, nothing will remain of it but your *patience*, or your *disturbance*—your submission or your *interior revolt*. Come, *it is nothing: let it pass*, and continue your work in the presence of God.

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What *good* can I do during this quarter of an hour before me?

Alone, *I can suffer, I can act, I can will, I can desire, I can accept.* With others, whoever they may be, *I can be patient, I can endure, I can console, I can counsel, I can strengthen, I can give happiness.*

And all this I can do every quarter of an hour! And any one of these things will help to gain heaven!

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It is not corporal fatigue which weighs upon us, making duty painful: it is a sad or culpable heart. The heart has wings when it is pure and joyful.

XLIV.

JESUS AND I.

Thank you for your little leaf entitled, *God and I*; it has calmed and gladdened my soul, making it experience the *comfort* which the senses feel in the sudden transition from a heavy, dull atmosphere to one that is fresh and bracing.

God watching over me—God thinking of me—God caring for all the little details of my life with the solicitude and forethought of a mother, what a consoling thought!

But may there not be another thought more—I will not say strengthening, but sweeter, more accessible, perhaps, and more intimate—*Jesus and I*?

Oh! yes; this other thought, *Jesus and I*, is more sensible, more intimate, and for that reason more fruitful in strength and joy.

Jesus, that is, God who took upon Himself our human nature; God *become one with us*, dwelling materially with us as a Father, a Friend; dwelling materially in the same house with us; in the tabernacle so near us; inviting us every day to His table; never wishing to be separated from us even for a day.

Jesus, that is, God conversing with us, not at a distance, by exchange of letters, or by words confided to faithful messengers, or even by intimate inspirations, but God possessing in reality a living body, lips which speak, hands which bless.

Jesus, that is, God manifesting His

love for us, not only by the abundance of material blessings, and by the affection for us which He inspires in creatures, but God who took to Himself *a heart of flesh*, that we might feel it beat against ours; *lips* to press to ours, with the affection of a mother piously kissing her child; *hands* to raise us up; arms to mercifully clasp us to His breast and make us feel that He loves us, that He pardons us.

Behold what Jesus is, *and all this he is for me*—for me, as if I were *alone with him on earth!*

And; when I kneel before the tabernacle, I can say, with deep sentiments of faith and love, *He is there!* He is there, hidden from my view, as my mother seated in her room adjoining mine and conscious of my presence.

He is there! It was He who sent an angel to bid me, *Come!* And now He looks upon me and allows me to unburden my heart; His glance rested not upon me when I was at labor, far from the church, because I was not in union with Him, and Jesus has wished a *home* upon earth; but now he sees me, and *I make Him happy* by visiting Him here.

Who does not comprehend the sweet emotion of Marie Eustelle, the rapture of Father Eymard, and these ardent words of one of his disciples:

“How good it is to be here! Here all trouble is forgotten: we find ourselves a hundred leagues from the earth, we think of mankind only to ask grace for them, and we long for a thousand hearts to console the *Abandoned*. One of the tabernacle, and a

thousand tongues of flame to win all men to the love of this adorable Master ~

And when on the altar, at *mass*, at the *exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*, I am before the sacred host, I can say · *He is here!* Veiled certainly to my human eyes, as the soul of my brother is to my senses; but *He is here, really present* and I can look upon that consecrated host with the conviction that this host is *Jesus*—the same Jesus who spoke, who labored, who lived with Mary, his 'Mother. And at these times why not remain before this host, to adore, to love, to enjoy, to meditate, to weep?

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And, when, at the moment of holy communion, the consecrated host is placed on my lips, I can say, with the

same conviction, with the same love. It is Jesus Christ — God-man — who touches my lips.

God surrounds me, penetrates me with his presence; *God touches me*, but I *touch not Him*. But Thou, Jesus! oh, how Thou has understood the aspirations of my poor heart, the need this body Thou didst create had to *feel itself vivified* by contact with a nature like its own; and Thou didst assure this nature, and Thou art come to lend Thyself, to give Thyself, to unite Thyself with our *senses*!

Behold a few of the thoughts which follow from these words, *Jesus and I*. There are others still sweeter, the result of these other words, *Jesus and I in holy communion*: we will return to them later.

And he who already even partially

understands these words, *Jesus and I*, oh! how disengaged he will see his life becomes from cares, anxieties and unrest, *his heart* more calm and humble will feel more devoted: *his character* will soften, his *trials* not alleviated perhaps, but, in a measure, changed into a crown for heaven; his very face will reflect something of the peace, the joy, the goodness of the countenance of Jesus!

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The practical conclusions of this are very simple:

If Jesus is *with me*, I must *visit* Him.

If Jesus is *for me*, I must *consult* Him *pray* to Him, *serve* Him, *depend* upon Him in *everything*.

O Jesus! help me to fulfill *these du-*

ties, which I owe thee, before indicating them in detail to my brethren.

XLV.

THE YOUNG GIRL'S BAROMETER.

The above was the title of a little engraving which contained a very ingenious design.

In the centre of a compass, prettily illuminated, was a needle lightly placed on a pivot and, being sensible to the least touch, could turn towards every point of the circumference.

All around it as in real barometers were written the words, *variable*, *stormy*, *heavy rain*, and others showing the different variations in the atmosphere and at each one of these words was a medallion representing in action what the word indicated—

cloudy, variable, or whatever it might be: only in this case the words did not apply to the atmosphere, but to the *character* of the young girl.

Let us try to divine the thought of the artist.

VARIABLE.

On the medallion is a picture of a little girl seated at a work-table. Her task for the day is before her, in a *book*, a *copy-book*, and a *piece of sewing*. To work, child! thou wilt find thy task marked for thee, under one form or another, every day of thy life; it will appear before thee at thy daily awakening, and a voice, the voice of conscience, will say to thee, as at this moment, *To work!*

To work! The little child gaily sets herself to work; but, look: she scarcely glances at the page marked for her,

and her fingers rapidly turn over the leaves of the whole book; then she closes it, looks at the open copy-book before her, smilingly reads the copy, and begins her writing with an industry which is delightful to witness.

But, look once more—the writing is cast disdainfully aside, and the little one resumes her book, murmuring, with a yawn, How tiresome this is.

She rises and goes to the window; she listens to a bird singing; she follows with her eyes a workman who is going across the fields; then she quickly turns to pursue a butterfly which has just come in through the window and is tremblingly fluttering about her work-table

But thou, giddy, fickle little one, dost thou not see that the hour is

nearly gone, and thy task on the table will be still there to-morrow?

Remain, remain, then, where thy mother placed thee: begin, continue, and quietly complete the task thy mother assigned thee.

If, at ten years of age, thou canst not courageously conquer disgust, lassitude, and weariness—if thou canst not conquer thyself to learn the easy page before thee, how painful will be thy future life. It will be a useless life: a life without order, a life without result, a life without peace!

Little one, be less fickle: fix only for a few moments, fix thy mind and gently command its attention to the end of that line then another and, little by little, the task will be accomplished, and thy mother will be pleased.

Nothing, my child—nothing good is ever effected without *perseverance*

LIGHT RAIN.

The sky is only partially clear. a few pink and white clouds pass overhead, assuming a thousand fantastic shapes, and the child, who is now a young girl, follows them with her eyes.

Her glance, but a moment since so clear, becomes clouded like the sky, and—but what is this? A tear, then another: . . . and they continue to fall while she gazes motionless.

And the angel guardian of the young girl moves his wings he prays, and softly murmurs, “No *dreams*, child; repress those dreams which darken the heart and the will—those moving dreams which cause

thee to weep, not bitter tears, doubtless, but which trace a sorrowful furrow in the heart wound it, and gradually destroy its strength.

“The heart must be strong to accomplish its mission, and habitual *serenity* alone can give it that strength. The *dew* of the eyes, called tears, is not refreshing: it is withering.

“My child! remain not a *dreamer*: labor, pray devote thyself!

“And then beware of harboring in the depth of thy soul, or thy heart, what is called a *secret*. A secret, at thy age, is a gnawing and destroying worm.

The secrets of thy heart confide to thy mother.

The secrets of thy soul, thou knowest to whom thou must confide them.”

HEAVY RAIN.

This is rare with the young girl, but frequent with the little child. The young girl loves to appear with only *dew* upon her cheeks: perhaps she thinks the *heavy rain* destroys the flowers

True tears fall abundantly sometimes from the eyes of the young girl; but then they are the result of one of those sorrowful events which affect a whole life, and the cause of which remains a secret with God—such as *mourning, separation, sickness of a loved one*: . . . and these tears we respect.

Ah! my child, may God spare thee such tears for a long time to come; and, when thy oppressed heart can no longer retain them, go, go, weep be-

fore the altar of Jesus. He alone understands thy tears, and can render them meritorious.

The little child cries and weeps . . . with a luxury of woe. The *refusal of a sweetmeat, the postponement of a walk, the deprivation of a toy*, reduces her to despair.

Poor mama! But . . . spring rains quickly come, and quickly go.

With the little one, a charming and inexplicable means of arresting *the heavy rain* is, not to see it fall.

CLOUDY.

This word, applied to the atmosphere of the character, is synonymous with *pouting*. The vapors which form it come from *irritated self-love*.

Why does Louise smile no more at table? Why does she remain in a

corner of the room, with bent head and half-ferocious expression? Why does she reply to the attentions of her mother in words that are scarcely polite?

Because yesterday, at the *soirée*, Theresa was more amiable and more admired than she.

Because the dressmaker made a trifling mistake in the cutting of her dress.

Because she was refused money for some whim.

Because . . . because . . .

Oh, admiration! oh, dress! oh, money! Sweet sunshine of the young girl—come quickly to banish this cloud from her brow: . . . but, if you dissipate the *cloud on her brow*, you will not dispel the *cloud from her soul*;

and it is from the soul that clouds rise to the brow. The pure, simple, pious soul has never an anxious brow. In the language of virtue, the clouds of the soul are called *sin*.

Prayer, modesty, loving and humble submission prevent their forming.

STORMY.

This state of the atmosphere is sometimes sudden; other times it is grumblingly announced like distant thunder. The young girl stamps her foot, tears up the work she has begun, destroys with passionate vehemence objects which she idolized but the day previous; and bitter, wicked, unjust words escape her lips.

When the mother alone is witness of these transports, she weeps, and, with her usual goodness, repairs the

disorder, and waits, with a sore heart, till the storm is spent.

Mother, too weak mother, it is doubtless very late to impose thy will upon a young girl eighteen years of age! Why didst thou not vigorously and firmly correct the caprices and obstinacy of thy child at five and ten years of age? And, yet, remember thou art culpable if thou art simply satisfied to *weep*, or *even to pray*.

Seriously and firmly control a capricious will.

Oppose a passive and grave resistance to an unreasonable desire.

Meet cries and murmurs with a dignified silence. . . .

Wait, certainly, the end of the *paroxysm*, but afterwards know how to punish without anger or emotion; and, above all, let the punishment

consist in the deprivation of the object desired.

Never yield to promises, or pouting or even to a refusal to take nourishment.

Pardon, but always exact submission to punishment. Pardon is not always exemption from merited pain; it is, above all, more constant proof of affection.

Oh! later . . . what terrible results these *storms* may have in a household!

VERY DRY.

Very dry! Can these words be written without calumny on the heart of a young girl? Yes, sometimes; when this heart, which God has made so pious and so devoted, urged by coquetry, disports itself and spends long hours before . . . *a mirror*.

The mirror! Oh! who can tell all the *harm* hidden in this little piece of furniture, so elegant and so inoffensive at first sight!

There is, first of all, a *charm* which slowly, slowly fascinates and allures, with the power of the serpent over the bird; then *retains, charms, enchants* its victim, forcing her to return, to gaze, to pose, to adjust, to smile, to worship.

There is a *radiance* from it which produces a *dry* atmosphere; and gradually, day by day, as the burning Provence sun absorbs the juice of the half-open fruit, this atmosphere absorbs the sweet virtues which make a young girl so charming—*tenderness, kindness, piety, and devotion.*

Hear the conversation that goes on before a mirror:

Oh! how beautiful I will be this evening!

Yes, replies conscience; but thy mother will be alone during long hours.

No matter!

Oh! how becoming that bracelet I saw would be to me!

Yes; but the money for it would be so useful to that poor woman who came to speak to thee this morning about her little sick children.

No matter!

Oh! how detestable and proud that Léonie is! Yesterday one heard nothing but her praises!

Yet she likes thee very much.

What matters that to me?

Poor bird. so desirous of liberty, beware of the mirror which attracts thee!

Poor, delicate flower, beware of the blighting rays of that sun!

FAIR WEATHER.

For the young girl I know but one season of *fair weather*, and that is when the conscience is at rest—the time from one devout communion to another.

All that is done during this time has a character of peace, of joy of kindness, which is resting and soothing.

There are even hours which make this *fair weather* more attractive—brighter, so to speak, and more loved; as on a beautiful day there are balmy perfumes through the atmosphere, which make it sweeter. These hours are when *a difficult duty is perfectly accomplished; an evil inclina-*

tion subdued; a charity of the purse or the heart liberally bestowed; a sacrifice generously made which conscience exacts.

Oh! young girl, the barometer is forcibly obliged to vary according to the temperature.

The needle goes and comes from *variable* to *stormy*, from *fair weather* to *cloudy*: as, alas! perhaps, the glance of thy mother, the glance of God have been forced to vary up to this present hour, unable to rest in peace either on thy heart or thy soul.

If it is not possible to preserve *un-changeable fair weather* in the blue sky, it is possible to preserve peace in thy soul and love in thy heart. Put them under the protection of prayer, of labor, of charity.

XLVI.

THE CIVIL ZOUAVES.

Have the readers of the *Golden Sands* preserved a recollection of a little pamphlet which went through the Catholic world, endeavoring to effect, in the name and behalf of the Church, what is so frequently tried in the name and behalf of evil—that is, an *enlistment*?

This little leaf bore the title of *The Civil Zouaves*. It asked that every one should engage himself to defend *God, the Church, the Holy See*—each according to his age and position, by word and by example, with the same courage and the same intrepidity that the pontifical zouaves defended the Pope with their arms.

May not this be the hour for resuming this *enlistment*, and is it necessary to show the opportunity for it? "There is a time," says Father Faber, "when fidelity can not be excessive," and that time has come. Moreover, was there ever a time when fidelity to the vicar of Christ could be accused of excess?

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Do not alarm yourself with the thought that all your habits will be disturbed; that you must interrupt the routine of your daily life; assist at reunions; excite the zeal of the indifferent; gather about you a certain number of friends. . . . No; this *enlistment* is more simple. *It does not disturb your daily life; it does not increase the number of your prayers;*

it does not take you from your home circle.

It may be summed up in the following words: *Simply and frankly show yourself a Catholic. It will have the result of strengthening your character, and giving a Christian virility to your will.*

I.

Here are some of the obligations of this enlistment :

In passing before a church, particularly one where the Blessed Sacrament is preserved, to make a salutation or the sign of the cross.

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On meeting a priest or a religious, even though they are not known to you, to *salute them*: they are the servants of our Master, Jesus Christ.

Never to hesitate to accompany publicly a religious or a priest: he honors us by accepting us as the companion of his route. The Emperor Constantine never left Rome without being accompanied by several priests; and one day, on being asked why these priests never left him, he replied, *They are the guardians of my soul.*

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In the railway carriage, as the train is starting, to silently make *the sign of the cross*. A woman who thus placed herself under the protection of God perceived a scornful smile on the lips of a man who was looking at her. *I recommend myself to God*, she said, *so that, if the train should go off the track, I may not be uneasy.*

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Before meals, even though not alone, to *make the sign of the cross*, not covertly, but calmly and dignifiedly.

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To *bind* ourselves, as far as the duties of our state permit, to accompany the *Holy Viaticum* to the dwelling where the priest is bearing it; and, if we are fortunate enough to meet the *Blessed Sacrament* in the street, to make the sign of the cross, respectfully kneeling, with bent head, before our God who passes and blesses us.

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Should you learn of a sick person, with no one near him who will dare to speak to him of the *last sacraments*, go, go to him, and affectionately tell

him of the good God, who consoles, who strengthens, who heals. Remember that there is question of a soul which may be lost, and may *blaspheme your God* during all eternity!

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Resent every word against religion, against the Church, against priests. It is less difficult than one would imagine. *Young girls and young women* have a way of imposing silence which is peculiar to themselves, and it is always successful; they have only to desire it. *Older women and mothers of families*, particularly when one of their children is present, well understand the ascendancy which their age and their dignity as mother give them. *Respect the presence of my child*, said one of them.

O young girls! O mothers! if you would be more seriously Christian, and show more energy what power you would have for good!

What: ladies, said a priest in a meeting of Christian mothers, they do not smoke before you without permission, and they may dare to utter *unbecoming words* before you! No not if you do not wish it!

Nothing arrests a too free and scandalous conversation like a word from a loyal and pure-hearted young man. *What you have just said is not becoming* *su* was remarked one day with dignity by a young man wearing the costume of a Catholic college and he who was reproved was silent for the courageous words were greeted with an approving smile by the listeners.

Oh courage! if we only possessed it!

* * *

There is a childish expression which we have often heard, and we have been impressed with its candor its simplicity and its strength

In the midst of a discussion, a child who has exhausted all his reasons, and yet feels the truth of what he argues, ends all dispute by affirming, *Mamma said so*; and the teaching of his mother is *everything*—his mother is not deceived she is always right.

We Catholics when we can say. *The Pope has said it* that is the end of it and we are in the right. We may not know how to reply to the cavils of others; we may be dazzled by brilliant sophistries but we may be

sure that we have truth and reason on our side.

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If, upon hearing a blasphemy, the respect which you owe to the age or the position of the person arrests the reproof on your lips, *know how to show your mortification* in such a manner as to make it manifest that you are *deeply wounded*; or let your severe and grave glance tell the offender that respect alone prevents you from reprimanding him.

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Never go on a journey without taking with you little pious and Catholic leaves to *give away*, or at least to *forget them* in the place you have occupied.

Will we be found indifferent to

the *propagation* of Catholic leaves and pamphlets when error and evil excite our admiration by their zeal and their disinterestedness! The time has come when *alms to the soul and the mind* is as necessary as *alms to the body*.

It is not means which are wanting; once more, it is courage!

Refuse all reading which is either frivolous or hostile to the Church; and read without ostentation doubtless, but at the same time openly and without human respect, Catholic leaves and pamphlets.

II.

Is this all? No; there are certainly other acts relating to one's social position, surroundings, and circumstances; there are those, above all, which are inspired by a *Christian spirit*—that

Christian spirit which thinks, lives, moves, under the influence of the majesty and grandeur of God, beholding Him as the principal and end of all things: God sustaining us in life; God's glance following us; God awaiting from us the obedience and devotion which a chief expects from his subordinate, a father from his child.

That *Christian spirit* which leads us to accept for our motto that lofty expression which a bishop has borrowed from the gospel, *Etiam si omnes ego non*—Although all shall be scandalized in thee, yet not I.

Let us then say to God, every morning *My God, behold me! give me to-day an occasion of proving my fidelity by defending Thy cause and affirming my faith!*

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Affirm our faith ! we must be ready to do this *everywhere, and in all things.*

In church, by our respectful, grave, and recollected deportment, by making the sign of the cross openly, and by that modesty of glance and demeanor which indicates that we feel ourselves in the house of God.

In our room, by the rigorous exclusion of all those works of art which savor of sensuality—almost-naked statues, realistic engravings, insipid, sentimental clock-pieces. . . . Thank God, there are sufficient beauties in Christian art to satisfy the love of the beautiful in the strictest and most elevated sense.

Let us, Christians, abandon what is simply *pretty* to those who are satis-

fied with it; let us reserve the *beautiful*; it belongs to us by right. A *beautiful* crucifix, how grandly it adorns a room! how well it protects it! how it brightens it with peace and tranquillity! A beautiful engraving of the Blessed Virgin, after *Fra Angelico* how powerfully it speaks to those who look upon it, saying, *be pure!*

We must affirm our faith by an ever-scrupulous modesty in our *toilet*, which need not prevent its being elegant, fresh, and tasteful, according to our age and position.

The Holy Father, a few years ago, blessed, with the most encouraging words, a pamphlet urging Christian women to resist the *allurement of the fashion*, and never to employ any

work-women but those who had bound themselves never to make an *immodest dress*.

What a fruitful apostleship was this !

III.

To work ! generous souls, who knew 'not the mission of *defending Jesus Christ and his Church*, never supposing that, with such small means, you could become *true Christian soldiers* ! To work ! I do not say to you, *attack*, but *defend* !

Certainly, you will have humiliations to undergo, one day or another : but what matters that ? They are the chances of war against evil, and victory will rest on your arms.

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But do not forget, zouaves of Jesus Christ, that zeal, courage, prudence.

tact, boldness even—you need all these—come from above, and are only given to prayer, *generous prayer*, which opens the heart and completely possesses it; *devoted prayer*, which refuses neither labor nor sacrifice.

Do you remember that naïve, chivalric expression of the gallant Lahire, before going into battle: *Lord, do for Lahire what Lahire would do for Thee if Thou wert Lahire and he were the good God*; and he went forth, sure of victory.

Zouaves of Jesus Christ, defend your Master: your Master will defend you.

END.

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